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PERSONALITY

IN

METAPHYSICS AND POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY

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PERSONALITY

"Noli foras ire : in te redi : in interiore homine habitat veritas."—AUGUSTINE.

"Nosce teipsum et cognosces creatorem tuum."—AVERRÒES.

"Men have supposed that in philosophy they could advance only by going forwards, whereas the truth is they can advance only by going in a manner backwards. We have tried to get *to the end* without having first got *to the beginning*. The primitive articles of all thought, the seminal principles of all reason, the necessary constituents of all knowledge, the keys of all truth, lie at first buried under our very feet, but as yet we are not privileged to find them."—FERRIER.

"Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas."—VIRGIL.

"L'homme est le morceau le plus difficile dans tous les systèmes."

PERSONALITY

THE BEGINNING AND END OF METAPHYSICS

AND A

NECESSARY ASSUMPTION IN ALL POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY

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PERSONALITY.

"WE have taken up the fact of this universe," says Thomas Carlyle, "as it is not. We have quietly closed our eyes to the eternal substance of things, and opened them only to the shows and shams of things. We believe this universe to be intrinsically a great unintelligible Perhaps. Extrinsically, clear enough, it is a great, most extensive cattle-fold, with most extensive kitchen-ranges and dining-tables, whereat he is wise who can find a place. All truth of this universe is uncertain; only the profit and loss of it—the pudding and praise of it—are and remain very visible to the practical man. There is no longer any God for us. God's laws are become a greatest happiness principle, a parliamentary expediency. The

heavens overarch us only as an astronomical time-keeper,—a butt for Herschel's telescopes to shoot science at. Man has lost the soul out of him, and now after the due period begins to find the want of it."

There is much truth in this, except, perhaps, that the last seven words are rather premature. Many of the leaders of thought believe and teach that God and the soul are no more. One of our most distinguished psychologists tells us that "the ego is a pure fiction, coined from nonentity:" and another celebrated *littérateur* is so anxious to show the absurdity of believing in, or even hoping for, a God, that he always writes the word with a small "g." The universe has been resolved into a set of phenomena, whose sequences exhibit only such meaningless regularity as may be observed in the drawing of balls out of a ballot-box; and the skilful analysts, by way of *coup de grâce*, have ended by resolving *themselves* into a set of similar phenomena. There are only appearances without us, and nothing to be seen behind the appearances; only appearances within us, and nothing by which the appearances can be seen. "The Universe = Phenomena." This is to be the gospel of the future. And when every man believes it,—when men come to recognise themselves as merely series

of sensations, and the external world as only the abstract possibility of sensation in which custom has taught them to believe,—above all, when they come to feel that there is absolutely no chance of ever discovering any *meaning* in anything, then the true golden age will have been reached. In other words, when the search after reason has been given up, the true reign of reason will have begun.

To those who think thus, metaphysics is, of course, a remnant of barbarism, only a little removed from the fetishism that flourished in the infancy of the race; or, at the best, it is but a puerile amusement which, when one becomes a man, that is a Positivist, ought to be put away. Now it is the purpose of the present essay to offer some suggestions tending to show that this estimate of metaphysics is incorrect—that its failures in the past have been chiefly due to false methods and illegitimate starting-points—and that pure phenomenalism, without some admixture of metaphysical elements, is an unthinkable absurdity.

It would be well at the outset clearly to distinguish between three words,—viz., Psychology, Philosophy, and Metaphysics, which are frequently used as more or less synonymous. Language is poor enough at the best, and it is to be deplored when it is made poorer by any avoidable ambi-

guities. Schwegler's definition of philosophy is this: "It is the thinking of the entire empirical finite in the form of an intelligently articulated system." Now, if we omit the word "intelligently," this definition will apply to the Positive philosophy, which denies the possibility of metaphysics, and restricts itself to the laws of sequence and coexistence that exist among phenomena. And as the term philosophy is always applied to the systems of Hume, Comte, and others—that is, to systems which are pre-eminently anti-metaphysical—it is better to define it so that it will distinctly include phenomenalists. Philosophy, then, should mean the search for those ultimate generalisations which will embrace, without necessarily seeking to *account for*, the narrower generalisations of the separate sciences.

Positivism deserved the name of philosophy because it aimed at constructing a "hierarchy of the sciences," thus transforming them into an organic whole, in which each part would depend on all that preceded, and determine all that succeeded. Lewes returns to the use of the word metaphysics in his 'Problems of Life and Mind.' "The object of the sciences is laws," he says; "the object of metaphysics the laws of laws. Metaphysics is objective logic, or the logic

of the cosmos, or the codification of the laws of cause. If we understand metaphysics in its primitive sense as τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά, that which comes after physics, it will embrace the ultimate generalisations of research, and become the name for the science of the *most general conceptions.*" Here, however, he stops short. He goes a little further than Hume and Comte, since Comte denied the legitimacy of the word cause, and Hume maintained that " the highest end of human reason is to reduce many particular effects to a few general causes, such as electricity, gravity, cohesion, &c." But Lewes does not enter into the region of metaphysics properly so called, a study which he now proposes to designate metempirics.

Again, I think it would be well to draw a sharp distinction between psychology and metaphysics, because the legitimacy of psychology is admitted by anti-metaphysical writers, such as J. S. Mill and Lewes. I do not, therefore, deem it expedient to make psychology, as Mansel does, a branch of metaphysics concerned with the facts of consciousness as such, the other branch being termed ontology, or that which is concerned with the facts of consciousness in relation to the realities of which those facts bear testimony. If there be an entity, call it vital principle, ego, or what

not, that can be distinguished in thought from the passing states of consciousness, that principle belongs to metaphysics, just as does the principle, if there be one, which underlies external phenomena. Some facts of consciousness, as we shall see, are noumenal and metaphysical, and psychology should, in my judgment, take cognisance only of phenomena. For then, again, as in the case of philosophy, we should have a word and a science in regard to which there will be little dispute. For example, both Mill and Lewes recognise the possibility of a science of psychology and the importance of the introspective method. They differ only in this, that Mill would place it among the hierarchy of sciences, while Lewes would make it a branch of biology.

Comte, it is true, denies the legitimacy of psychological science, and maintains that introspection can only lead to illusion. This he makes little effort to prove. He relies on the stock arguments of Gall and others, that in order to reflect on a state of mind, we must first pass out of that state into another; and so the state to be reflected on will be over before reflection can begin. He proposes to substitute phrenology and the study of the minds of others. But even if all the phrenological hypotheses were correct, psychological

observation would still be necessary; for, as Mill justly says, "it is impossible to ascertain the correspondence between two things by studying only one of them." And as for the observation of other minds, the signs by which they are manifested must be meaningless to any one who has not studied his own mind and *its* manifestations. This, indeed, Comte seems to admit in one passage, when he says that "man at first knows only himself, and applies this knowledge as a formula to universal nature." At all events, if introspection is an impossibility, knowledge is also an impossibility.

Investigating states of consciousness by introspection merely means *attending* to their presentations or representations. If we could not do the first, we could know nothing, not even a single sensation; if we could not do the second, we might know our passing states, but this momentary knowledge would be constantly passing into ignorance, and would thus be the most unreal of dissolving views. I hope to show presently that the denial of an ego always leads to contradictions and absurdities; but the additional denial of introspection involves the theory of knowledge in such manifest and hopeless difficulties, that it is now accepted by very few writers of repute. Accord-

ing to Comte, transitory phenomena of nothings are apprehended by equally evanescent phenomena of nobodies; but the latter cannot really be a mean to knowledge, for he allows no ego by which they can be cognised, and he expressly maintains that they cannot know themselves, without first ceasing to be, in which case there would be nothing left to be known. Of course, any such theory which involves the denial of knowledge is self-destructive; for if we can know nothing, we cannot know the truth of a theory which maintains that we can know nothing.

A science of psychology, without any distinct recognition of metaphysical elements, has been clearly sketched by J. S. Mill. Such a science is not directly concerned with speculations regarding the mind's own nature. It understands, by the laws of mind, those of mental *phenomena*. Sensations, having for their immediate antecedents states of the body, fall under physiology; (though, as we shall hereafter see, the commonest sensation cannot be *accounted for* till we have postulated the existence of a *subject* not apprehensible by sense). If all mental states were equally dependent with sensations on physical conditions, mental science, as the science of mental phenomena, might be regarded as merely a branch of physi-

ology. But, as Mill says, there exist uniformities among states of mind which can be ascertained by observation and experiment, and which cannot be deduced from the laws of our nervous organism. Hence, for a long time at any rate, all knowledge of them must be sought in a direct study of the mental successions themselves. Psychology Mill defines as "the science which is concerned with the uniformities of succession; the laws, whether ultimate or derivative, according to which mental states succeed one another." This definition I could accept, with the proviso that *all* our mental experience does not, in my judgment, follow in the way of necessary sequence from preceding states. Volition I regard as an originative activity of a noumenal ego, and not as a phenomenal state caused by a preceding state. Hence psychology, on my view of it, would include, among other things, the laws of sensation and emotion, of cognition and of reasoning, of habit and of instinct, of memory and of association, as well as the vast range of automatic processes which Dr Carpenter and Miss Cobbe have shown to form a large proportion of human activity. But the consideration of the ego itself, and its faculty of volition, are subjects for metaphysics, not for psychology. In this also Mill would have agreed, had he allowed

their metaphysical reality, since it was only as phenomenal states he admitted them into psychology.

Now, if we use physics in a wide sense to include the psychical correlatives of neural processes, and if we include the introspective investigation of states of consciousness among the physical methods, it may be said of the facts of consciousness included in such a science, as Professor Huxley said of *all* the facts of consciousness without exception, that they are practically interpretable by the method and formulæ of physics, or, as I should rather say, *generalisable;* for physics proper does not profess to *interpret* anything, except in the sense of bringing a narrower under a wider induction. The question is, Is there anything in our consciousness or in the universe that does not come under the category of phenomenal? If there is, it belongs to metaphysical science, and is of course not amenable to physical methods. "If beyond and *before* this phenomenalism," says Mr Grote, "we at all enter on the consideration of how we, feeling and thinking beings, come to the knowledge of the facts it embodies; or if beyond and *after* it we enter on the consideration of how we are to act or employ our phenomenal knowledge, we pass into quite a different region."

In a word, the fact that I am conscious of *myself*, and that I am "capable," as Huxley admits, "within certain limits, of *self-adjustment*," cannot be explained, nor even taken into consideration, by the methods and formulæ of physics.

The term metaphysics was applied by Andronicus of Rhodes to those of Aristotle's treatises which were to follow the physical books, and which were therefore called τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά. But there is an allowable etymology which makes the word extremely suggestive. It may mean that which lies *beyond* the physical—that is, beyond everything in nature and human nature to which we can apply the ordinary scientific methods of observation, experiment, and generalisation.[1] Metaphysics is concerned with the one and the permanent, as opposed to the many and the transitory, and so becomes synonymous with Ontology. The former, however, is a better word than the latter, since there is no ground for denying the existence or reality of phenomena, but only their permanent and ultimate reality. Metaphysics, then, deals with that which lies beyond phenomena, that which is the source or substratum of the temporarily existent. Metaphysics seeks for

[1] Cf. the use of the word in "Macbeth," Act I. scene v., "metaphysical aid"—*i. e.*, supernatural aid.

a principle of unity in man and in nature, a unity undiscoverable by the senses, or by mere generalisation from anything which they can reveal. It seeks a unal basis for the phenomena of nature and of human nature, and it endeavours to interpret and account for the many and the transitory by means of the one and the permanent. It aims a solving, or at any rate throwing light upon, the mystery of the universe, by discovering a meaning and a purpose in the ways of nature and of man. A science is a summation or generalisation of a particular set of facts; a system of philosophy is a co-ordination of all the sciences; metaphysics is concerned with their ultimate and transcendental basis.

But Lewes tells us, and all writers of the English school agree with him, that a study of the history of philosophy will prove the impossibility of metaphysics. It will be admitted, too, by many who are not inclined to Positivism, that the history of metaphysics is somewhat discouraging; and this discouragement is frequently felt, even by those who see that important truths have been discovered and unfolded by almost every metaphysical writer of repute. Now I cannot attribute this feeling of disappointment merely to the fact that unproved and unprovable theories are

included in metaphysical systems; for even "exact thinkers" do not hesitate to use unverified and unverifiable hypotheses as a means of reaching empirical truth. The dissatisfaction arises, I apprehend, chiefly because these systems seem, for the most part, to be *based* on fancy, and to start from propositions that are anything but axiomatic. To the end of the chapter of human life every system of metaphysics which aims at comprehensiveness will probably contain a good deal that cannot be proved; but we seem justified in demanding, if these systems are to receive our serious consideration, that they should, at any rate, be *founded upon* fact, and start from propositions that are undeniable. With this demand, however, metaphysicians have very seldom and very insufficiently complied. Hence their systems, as a general rule, carry with them little conviction, for their very first statements can be easily rebutted by contradictory assertions, which are at least equally tenable, and any truths they may contain appear to have been guessed at rather than proved.

A few illustrations may suffice. Thales perceived that the seeds of things were moist, and at once jumped to the conclusion that water, or rather moisture, was the First Cause. But there was just as much ground for saying that air or heat

was the origin of all things, since each of these principles is essential to life; and, as the reader is aware, they were afterwards fixed upon by Anaximander and Hippanus respectively. The Eleatics, proceeding on the false assumption that whatever did not exist always and everywhere could not be said to have existed at all, maintained that Ens, or the really existent, must be *unum et continuum.* Their opponents asserted that the really existent was *plura et discontinua*, proceeding on the equally false assumption that nothing existed which could not be detected by the senses. Empedocles maintained that all things were formed by attraction and repulsion between earth, air, fire, and water, which, because they *seemed* to be elementary, he termed *τέσσαρα τῶν πάντων ῥιζώματα.* And again, he assumed as self-evident that like can only be known by like, and that, therefore, our perception of external things is to be accounted for by the fact that the four elements of which they are composed, enter also into the composition of our own bodies. But the reply seems obvious, that if water in the body is needed to perceive water out of the body, similar means must be necessary for the perception of a loaf of bread. The Atomists traced back the *ῥιζώματα* to microscopic atoms. But their assumption that an in-

finite number of material particles, falling through an infinite space and time, had produced our world—in other words, that life, sensation, perception, and thought had come out of *plena* and *vacua*, which are dead, senseless, unperceiving, and unthinking—is a purely gratuitous assumption, neither founded on, nor even suggested by, experience. Again, what could well be more fanciful from beginning to end than the fundamental assumptions of Anaxagoras, that the primeval chaos of ὁμοιομερῆ was, so to speak, jerked into a number of distinguishable objects, by a movement which the νοῦς initiated, in the form of a self-perpetuating vortex? Plato started from the previously received hypotheses, that like can only be known by like, and that sensible things cannot be known at all, being the objects of δόξα and not of ἐπιστήμη. Most of the efforts of his transcendent genius are employed to explain the fact of knowledge on the basis of these assumptions, which he certainly did not *prove* to be legitimate. Aristotle, taking his start from Plato, brought the "ideas" of the latter from the celestial spheres to be the indwelling essence of sensible objects. This formal part of every σύνολον he explained by the theory that the inherent potentiality of the πρώτη ὕλη, at one end of the scale of existence, is instinctively incited

(as by a beloved object) by the πρώτον εἶδος, or first mover, at the other end, to take to itself *forms*, all nature being thus but a graduated conversion of matter into form, an eternal passing of the primeval substance into higher and higher ideal combinations. Surely this, as a foundation for a metaphysical explanation of the universe, involves too much imagination and too little reason, too many fancies and too few facts.

But Spinoza, Mr Lewes tells us, is the crucial instance by which the worthlessness of metaphysics may best be proved. In the 'Ethics' his theory of the universe is deduced from a definition of substance, by the aid of other equally arbitrary definitions, and some so-called axioms. "God," he says, "is the absolutely infinite being; in other words, He is self-comprised, self-contained substance, constituted by an infinity of attributes, each of which expresses an eternal and infinite essence." This definition, though Spinoza calls it an intuitive idea, and a *simplicissima veritas*, is really so far from being simple or intuitive, that, if ever reached at all, it must be the last result of metaphysical reflection. Hence the fact need not surprise us that the Spinozistic explanation of the universe has so seldom been accepted. It is interesting, ingenious, sublime. It discovers harmony,

beauty, cosmos, and law, where most men have seen only discord, deformity, disorder, and lawlessness. It offers a solution of the perennial problem of philosophy, and extracts monism out of a seeming dualism. It gives us consolation in suffering or remorse, by attempting to prove that all events are the necessary outcome of absolute perfection. It promises us an eternal life of calm and unruffled thought. It is, moreover, the work of a man who is now universally acknowledged to have lived a stainless and noble life. Yet we instinctively conclude that we cannot be Spinozists. Long before we discover any flaws in his argument, we *feel* that they are false. We say with Mr Froude, "It is not so; we know it; and that is enough." Now I apprehend the rejection of Spinozism, as a system, is justified not only because, in defining man as a *certus et determinatus modus cogitandi*, it contradicts what I shall try by-and-by to prove to be a fact of consciousness—namely, human freedom—not only because there is a want of cogency in the reasoning, but chiefly because it is deduced from an arbitrary and unproved definition. Even if the logic were as unimpeachable as Jacobi and Mr Lewes[1] have maintained, the system would not

[1] Whoever will take the trouble to go carefully through the 'Ethics' will find many circular reasonings, many definitions, be-

necessarily carry conviction with it, unless the existence of the thing defined were proved; for the most rigorous deductions from a fancy need not lead to facts. True, after having proved that one substance cannot be produced by another, he argues that therefore (Prop. 7) "Substance must be the cause of itself, or, in other words, to exist belongs to the nature of substance." But it is manifest that this tacitly assumes what it professes to prove — the question, namely, as to whether substance exists at all. If it be said the existence of substance is implied in its definition, what need is there for this demonstration, any more than in Euclid for propositions proving the possibility of superficies and squares? Nor is

sides the first, which are not definitions but assumptions, as well as many alterations of language to suit the exigencies of the argument. *E.g.*, the first axiom seems to answer to its name, as stated at the beginning of the first book—"Whatever is, is either in itself or in something else." But afterwards it is quoted thus: "Nothing exists but substances and modes,"—that is, nothing exists but self-comprised, self-conceived substances, and affections of the attributes of substances—a proposition which is by no means axiomatic, and which is only another way of stating his original definition. As an instance of circular reasoning, take the following proposition: "The more of perfection anything has, the more it acts and the less it suffers." Demonstration: "Perfection equals reality, and reality has the character of acting, not suffering." Again, what can be more false to fact, however true to theory, than such definitions as those of joy, sorrow, humility, &c.?

his *argumentum palmarium* for the existence of God any more conclusive. "Reality and perfection are identical: the more attributes anything has, the more real it is, or the more it exists; and hence God, being absolutely infinite, must have an infinity of attributes, and so exist absolutely." At the best, this argument only proves that *if there be* an absolutely real being, he must have an infinity of attributes. Curiously enough, while Spinoza maintains that common notions, such as man, freedom, virtue, good and evil, are vague and indefinite, he asserts that his notions of God and substance are indisputably clear. Even if they were so, it is not on clear conceptions, which may or may not have objective correlates, but on necessary facts, that metaphysics should be based. Instead of working his way from what is really certain towards that which we can never hope more than approximately to attain, he supposes the goal to be already reached, by an intuitive and ready-made idea, setting out from which he works his way back towards, though he never actually reaches, the only legitimate starting-point—namely, the facts of consciousness. Mr Lewes tells us that "a serious study of the 'Ethics' may be a drastic purge, clearing the mind from all the humours and vapours of ontology." "We can

only escape Spinozism," he says, "by denying the possibility of metaphysical science." We can escape it because it is deduced from what ought not to have been assumed. Hence the failure of Spinozism is an argument not against metaphysics, but only against an unsound metaphysical method.

Once more. Though I believe there is more to be learned from Hegel than from any preceding metaphysician, though the application of certain Hegelian principles to philosophical criticism has, I think, been attended with the happiest result, in Professor Green's *reductio ad absurdum* of the Lockian philosophy, and Professor Caird's *reductio ad* Hegel of the Kantian; yet Hegel's system, as a system, seems to me, like those of previous metaphysicians, to lack *solid foundation*. Mr Wallace says, in his 'Logic of Hegel,' that "the *cogito ergo sum* of Descartes must be dismissed, because the certainty does not lie at the very root of all things. To begin with the I, would only place us at a point where the severance between thought and being was already a *fait accompli*. The beginning of philosophy or logic must go far deeper than this division; it must penetrate to a stage where thought and being are at one—to the absolute unity of both which precedes their disruption into

the several worlds of nature and mind. It must show us the very beginning of thought before it has yet come to the full consciousness of itself, when the truth of what it is still lurks in the background." Now this is what Hegel attempts to do. But what proof have we that we *can* get back to this point? or that there ever was such an undifferentiated existence? Dr Stirling admits that the Hegelian dialectic sometimes leads to grotesqueness, if not absurdity, in the field of Nature. Why may it not lead to falsehood at the opposite end of the system—namely, in the theory of Being? It appears to be founded upon fact—the fact, namely, that Motion seems to involve the union of contradictories.[1] But what proof

[1] The difficulties in regard to motion, as stated by Zeno, have been disposed of by Mansel, Mill, De Morgan, and others. But it is, I think, possible to state them in an unanswerable way. De Morgan and Mill seem to imagine that there is no difficulty left if motion be defined as "the passage of a thing from one place to another." The question still remains unanswered, however, as to how the thing can make this passage. As Ferrier puts it, "Change cannot be explained if we regard Being and not-Being as separate conceptions, and not as essential moments of one indivisible conception. Suppose water undergoing the process of freezing, and that it has reached a certain degree of solidity (A); if appearance (or Being) and disappearance (or not-Being) were separate conceptions, then A's appearance would last a definite time, and also its disappearance, because our supposition is that the disappearance of A is not the appearance of B. Therefore the water must have lost one degree of solidity without

have we that it will reveal God to us "as He was in His eternal essence, before the creation of Nature or a single soul?" As the system stands it professes to deduce the universe from the *Reine Negativität* of the Notion, which dialectical reflection starts from pure nothing and pure being. Now either these once existed or they did not. If they did not, they cannot be the origin of all things. If they did, the deduction of the universe from them appears open to Mr Lewes's objection, that it amounts to the impossible equation $0 + 0 = 1$.

It seems scarcely to be wondered at that scientific men, in their love of exactness and precision, shrink from committing themselves to what seem, at first sight, such cloud-born speculations. "There are no writers," says De Morgan, "who give us so much 'must' with so little 'why' as metaphysicians." We need not be surprised that men,

acquiring any other—that is, it must be in no degree of solidity whatever." This mode of representing the contradictions involved in motion seems to me unassailable. If so, we have here a strong argument in favour of metaphysics. Since motion of some sort is connected with all forms of evolution and existence, the fact of the apparent contradictions involved in its conception points to the presence, in all phenomena, of a metaphysical element whose reality must be recognised by the Reason (*Vernunft*), though its mode of working cannot be grasped by the Understanding (*Verstand*).

in despair, have tried to content themselves with the knowledge of phenomena, and have imagined everything metaphysical to be beyond their grasp. We do wonder, however, at their persistence in this position, for it involves the inconceivability, κατ' ἐξοχήν, namely, how a number of states or appearances of knowing, with no connecting link between them, can cluster themselves together into a series which calls itself I.

Now it is the aim of this essay to show that metaphysics, like charity, should begin at home; that though metaphysics must be metempirical, in the sense of being concerned with what is not "reducible to sensation," it need not, and should not, be metempirical in the wider sense of the term experience, which embraces the whole of consciousness. The beginning of metaphysics I take to be personality, or the existence of an ego. Here we may find an immovable foundation. If it can be shown that feelings could not exist without an ego, then it is absurd to maintain that the ego cannot exist because it is not a feeling.

"*Cogito ergo sum;* it is necessary that I who think should be somewhat."[1] In other words, a

[1] Descartes went too far when he proceeded to interpret "*sum*" as meaning—"I am a being whose essence is to think, a being that has *nothing in common* with extension." This cannot be deduced from "*sum*," nor even from "*memini*."

thought is inconceivable without a thinker: the existence of my thought is inconceivable without the existence of myself to think it. Even if I were the work of a demon who was always imposing on me and deceiving me, I must still exist; for false thoughts, as much as true thoughts, require a thinker to think them. Gassendi and others have said that it might be as justly argued, *ambulo ergo sum.* Now it is quite true that, in order to perceive or imagine I walk, it is necessary that I exist to perceive or imagine it. But motion does not imply a correlative subject *in the same way* that thought does. We cannot argue from the existence of motion to the existence of something which apprehends it in the same way as we can from the existence of a thought to the existence of some one who thinks it. We can conceive, or we think we can conceive, of a moving object existing without being actually perceived; but we cannot conceive, and do not think we can conceive, of a sensation existing unless some one actually feels it. It is true that in imagining an unperceived object, I give it a subject, namely, myself; but in imagining a sensation not my own, I have to imagine it as subject *plus* object—that is, to give a subject to an object that has already a subject. In the one case there is subject *plus* object, in the

other there is subject *plus* (subject *plus* object). Sensation, in truth, is a single abstract word for a concrete double fact. Sensation means something felt by some one.

It is possible that vegetable life may result merely from a particular combination and location of the molecules of a body; it is impossible that such combination or location can ever account for sensibility, not to say intelligence. The triumphs of physiology have tended rather to obscure, than throw light upon, the processes of sensation and thought. It has been argued that, because certain conditions of the brain and nerves are the invariable antecedents of certain states of consciousness, in the former we have an *explanation* of the latter. So entirely has the brain been identified with consciousness, that Professor Clifford seems to think it a strong argument against the existence of a God that we cannot find his brain. Mill and Tyndall, it is true, have perceived clearly enough the difference between sensation and neural process. The latter says, "We have not an organ, nor apparently the rudiments of an organ, by which to apprehend how a motion in the brain becomes a sensation in consciousness." Maurice puts the difficulty thus: "The casuist, having done homage to all the instructions of the physiologist

will say, 'Yes, that is very remarkable indeed; and do all these emotions make me? Did you not say I had them? You might think it worth while to tell me who I am.'" This the physiologist cannot do, nor even the psychologist, in Mill's sense of that term, because "I" am not a phenomenon.

The fact that every feeling involves some one to feel it, has never been, in so many words, denied. The most zealous opponents of an ego avail themselves of ambiguities by which the existence of an ego can, at pleasure, be tacitly assumed. Mr Lewes, for instance, says that the molecular motion in the nerves, and the experienced sensation in consciousness, are only the objective and subjective *phases* of one and the same thing. He is thus enabled, whenever necessity requires, to treat the neural process as actually identical with the sensation. As Professor Green says,—"We shall not expect to find any philosophical writer who, having distinctly asked himself whether or no experience is a mere succession of feelings, void of a unifying principle, has distinctly answered 'yes.' By help of sundry familiar figures—those of the thread, the stream, &c.—our psychologists avoid the ultimate analysis by which the question is necessarily raised, and are able, by turns, to avail themselves of

a virtually affirmative and a virtually negative answer to it. The phrase 'states of consciousness,' as equivalent to feelings, has come conveniently into fashion as a further shelter for the ambiguity. We cannot employ this phrase of feelings without implying the persistence of a subject throughout them, their relation to which forms their nexus with each other. Thus, by the use of it the physical psychologist can disguise that disintegration of experience which is logically involved in its reduction to a succession of feelings corresponding to a series of occurrences in the nervous organism. The embarrassment which might be caused by a demand for a physiological account of this persistent subject, he can avoid by saying that to him experience is merely the succession of feelings. The question which might then arise as to the possibility of the successive feelings being also an experience of succession he can take out of his critic's mouth by the assumption that feelings are states of consciousness—states of a subject which recognises them as its successive modes." It is sometimes ludicrous to observe how, after denying a possible ego, writers are obliged to resort to an impossible one. Mr Lewes in his first volume of the 'Problems,' seems inclined to make the ego consist of a mass of

"systemic" sensations—those, namely, of nutrition, respiration, generation and the muscles, which, he says, constitute a stream of sentience, upon which each external stimulus forms a ripple, consciousness being caused by the consequent breach of equilibrium. But it is manifest that this illustration goes for nothing without the presupposition of a sentient observer. A mass of feeling, however large, cannot apprehend a feeling. It is the nature of a feeling to be felt, not to feel; and no addition to the number or volume of sensations can change their nature so as to convert them from psychical objects into a psychical subject. The same may be said of his statement in 'Mind,' that the term soul is the personification of the complex of present and revived feelings, and is the substratum of consciousness (in his general sense of that word), all the particular feelings being its *states*. Since, then, the necessity for an ego is never denied without being tacitly assumed, it may be taken to be really a self-evident truth, the contradictory of which is inconceivable, that, along with every sensation or feeling of any description whatever, there must exist a sentient principle capable of feeling it.

This will suggest to the reader the opening postulate of Ferrier's 'Institutes,'—"Along with

whatever any intelligence knows, it must, as the ground or condition of its knowledge, have some cognisance of itself." The axiom stated in the last paragraph goes further, in one sense, than this; in another, not so far. It is as true of feeling as of knowledge, that along with the feeling there must exist, as its ground or condition, some one to feel it. The *existence* of a self or feeling principle is an essential basis of all feeling; but its self-*cognisance* is not. This distinction between the existence and the self-consciousness of an ego, which Ferrier failed to make, is important. Ferrier's proposition is certainly not self-evident, and perhaps not true. The result of my own reflection on the subject is that I am not always self-conscious. In solving a difficult problem, for example, I seem to be entirely engrossed with the objective, and quite incognisant of myself. But though we may doubt or deny that every mental state involves a *knowledge* of self, we can neither doubt nor deny that every cognition or feeling involves the *existence* of some one to cognise or to feel it. This is of course only the old doctrine of the necessary implication of subject and object, which has been generally recognised more clearly as regards cognition than sensation.

Bain, it is true, denies the universal application

of this doctrine even in cognition. In his criticism on Ferrier, at the end of his 'Emotions and Will,' he says: "I dissent from the placing of self as a factor or foil in all our cognitions. I grant it to the fullest extent to the great cardinal cognition—subject *plus* object, mind *versus* matter, internal and external. I maintain, however, that this is only one of the cognitions of the human mind, though a very commanding one. Things might have been known though the subject and object distinction had never emerged at all, it being enough for cognition that any sort of contrast should exist. I can know light simply by transition to darkness. Light-darkness is a genuine cognition. We might remain for ever at the point of being distinctly aware of a certain number of qualities without attaining the subject-object cognition." Bain substitutes for Ferrier's postulate the following: "Along with whatever any intelligence knows, it must, as the ground or condition of its knowledge, have some cognisance of a quality in contrast with what is known;" or, "whenever intelligence is concerned with anything as an object, it must, as the ground or condition of its knowledge, have some cognisance of a subject."

There is great confusion here—for which Ferrier is to some extent responsible—between the neces-

sary *existence* of a cognitive subject, whenever there is a cognised object, and its contingent *recognition of itself*, as a subject. There cannot be cognition without a knowing subject, though there may easily be cognition—as in the case of animals and savages, and sometimes, I think, in our own —without the subject cognising itself as a knowing subject. There is no other conceivable notion of cognition than the knowledge of something by some one: and hence a self is a necessary factor or foil in all cognition. It is true that "the cognition of the difference between subject and object is only one of the cognitions of the human mind," and that "we might have been distinctly aware of many qualities without ever attaining to this distinction," but not unless there had existed a human mind to have cognitions, nor unless we had existed to attain distinctions. The mind—the "I," the "we," which Bain introduces as of no account—is the real basis of knowledge, and ought to be taken into account quite as much as the qualities cognised. "I can know the light simply by transition to darkness." Yes, if I exist, and have the power of distinguishing and knowing. "Light-darkness is a genuine cognition." Yes, in a knower, but not without. "It is enough for cognition that any sort of contrast should

exist." Surely there must be many contrasts existing in uninhabited parts of the universe, of which, unless there be an Omniscient intelligence, there is no cognition; and even if there be, His cognition might not at all correspond with our own.

Though Ferrier is partly responsible for the confusion in this passage, the remarks which Professor Bain makes in criticising it are quite in keeping with what he asserts throughout his chapter on Consciousness. Change of impression, he rightly concludes, is essential to any kind of consciousness. We are not conscious of the motion of the earth, because there is nothing with which to contrast it, and because it is always present; nor, for similar reasons, do we perceive the pressure of the atmosphere on the surface of the body. As Hobbes puts it, "It is almost all one for a man to be always sensible of one and the same thing and not to be sensible at all of anything." Bain has done good service in enlarging on the essential relativity of knowledge; but he forgets that two comparable qualities will not make knowledge without some one to compare them. Though *we* cannot know the motion of the earth, it is quite conceivable that there may be intelligences, as, *e.g.*, the inhabitants of other planets,

which can, because they have something with which they are able to contrast it. "We are affected with surprise in passing from one impression to another." True; but *we* must exist in order to "pass" and "be surprised." By means of ambiguous phrases, Bain is able sometimes to argue as if this were not the case, as, *e.g.*, in the following sentence: "In order to produce any effect on the senses there must be a change, and everything in the nature of change *thrills* through the brain with a kind of surprise." But, strictly speaking, the molecules of the brain can be neither thrilled nor surprised; at most they can only be the occasion of a thrill or surprise in a sentient subject.

Let us look at Bain's account of the origin of the cognition of subject and object. "The contrast of subject and object springs originally from the contrast of movement, or active energy and passive sensation. Were our impressions all movements, we should know nothing of movement as a whole for want of something to contrast it with; our knowledge would then be confined to the particulars wherein movements differed." Similarly, if our impressions were all sensations. "Movement and sense are the most marked antithesis among all our present feelings. In the presence

of the feeling of movement as a foil, we discern something common to all sensations, in spite of their varieties. The antithesis between movement and sensation is an essential preliminary to that between self and the external world. The difference between the actual and ideal is this, that the actual impression changes with all our movements, and we must go through a certain amount of bodily exercise to secure and retain it. When it becomes ideal, all that is dispensed with. The transition is a marked one, and impresses the mind with a contrast or mental foil—in short, with a cognition (subject and object). It is, however, an extravagance of the fancy to project one of these into the sphere of independent existence, apart from our whole mental life. The real fact is, that the two greatly differing experiences develop between them a cognition." I have no wish to prove that the ego is "an independent existence, apart from our whole mental life," but only that without it there could be no mental life at all. Bain *throughout tacitly assumes* a something which apprehends sensations and movements and the difference between them, although the argument is supposed to prove the non-existence of the ego. We have therefore only two alternatives—either to suppose a separate self for each state, or the same self for all. Now,

even on the ground of Occam's razor,—"Entia non sunt multiplicanda præter necessitatem,"—the latter would be the most philosophical opinion. And when it is remembered that knowledge is impossible without memory, and memory, as we shall find, is inconceivable without supposing that the same subject has been present in the remembered states, the necessity for accepting the doctrine of a permanent ego becomes more apparent.

It is absolutely impossible to explain or comprehend the *continuity* of consciousness, except on the supposition of a subject that continues after the transitory states have gone. To quote an illustration of Mr Picton's—"When a schoolmaster canes a row of boys one after another, they have similar feelings, but no continuous feeling. In order to the existence of the latter the strokes must be given successively to one boy,"—that is, to one percipient subject. Hence, even if we grant that there may have been handed on to the molecules, of which a brain is at present composed, affections similar to those which existed in the molecules that formed it years ago, the similarity can only be *apprehended* by a single subject that was cognisant of both. Let us suppose two states of consciousness, which are not connected by any permanent underlying substratum—say a

state of light followed by a state of darkness—in other words, some one sentient of light followed by some one sentient of darkness, and these two some ones different. Now, waiving the objection that, according to Bain's own theory, neither subject could be *sentient* of the one till it had experienced a transition to the other, it is manifest that neither could be *cognisant* of the difference between light and darkness unless it had experienced *both*. But, by hypothesis, the first state is supposed to be over when the second state has begun. Hence we must believe that there is a "shock" between two things, one of which has ceased to exist. So the doctrine of relativity, without the supposition of a permanent subject to take cognisance of the relativity, lands us in the most utter absurdity. Bain's theory is that we can only know when we have two associated notions, and also a belief in their connection. Now each notion and the belief are separate states of consciousness, and cannot, or at any rate do not usually, coexist. It is necessary, therefore, that as knowledge has arisen by means of them, there must be a subject which has coexisted with them all. Hundreds of sentences might be quoted in which the real mystery of the ego is quietly assumed, and then made to assist in its own assas-

sination. "The sense of difference," he tells us, "is the most rudimentary property of our intellectual being." But what is our intellectual being? It must either be the brain, or something different from the brain. It cannot be the latter (with Bain), for that would make it a metaphysical entity. Hence we must suppose it is the brain itself. But this supposition will not explain the existence of a single sensation. "Light affects the brain in a certain way, darkness in another, and the transition between the two in a third, which may be called a shock, or surprise, or thrill." But three different motions cannot go on in the same part of the brain at one time. Hence the first two must be over before the third can exist, which third can therefore never come into consciousness at all—according to Bain's own doctrine of relativity—since its foil is no longer in existence. Should it be supposed that the motions take place in different parts of the brain, there must be something to bridge the gaps between them and take cognisance of them all. What does Professor Bain really mean by the following sentence? "In perception we are subject and object by turn: object, when attending to the form and magnitude of a conflagration, for example; subject, when we give way to the emotional effect of the luminous blaze."

That it is the same thing which "gives way" and which "attends," may be inferred by his applying "we" to both. Now, if there has only been a state of attention to form or magnitude, afterwards succeeded by a state of emotion, and if there has been nothing common to the two states, this mode of expression is surely not justifiable. If the ego be really "a fiction coined from nonentity," it is time that "exact thinkers" should help us to free ourselves from the misleading influence of language.

Bain confounds the existence of a *permanent* subject, related successively to different objects, with that of an *absolute* subject, related to no object at all. "As we can think and speak," he says, "of light by itself, without express mention of its foil, darkness, so we can think of the *object*, while the subject is tacitly understood, and the opposite. We never could have come to the notion of externality without its contrast; but the notion being once formed, we have the power of looking to it alone. An absolute object or subject, however, is an utter irrelevance, absurdity, and impossibility." It might almost as well be argued, that because extension without some sort of colour is an irrelevance or impossibility, it is therefore foolish to suppose that the palings yonder have remained the same while receiving dif-

ferent coatings of paint. It is really Bain himself who is guilty of the absurdity. It is he who maintains the existence of absolute objects, since he frequently talks as if mental states were self-supporting, and did not require any sentient or cognitive subject. It is amusing to observe how the denial of the ego makes it necessary for him to assume the real existence of what all admit to be abstractions. "Knowledge," he says, "involves two notions and a belief in their connection." Bain here seems to see the necessity for some bond of union, and he tells us that the binding circumstance between the two notions is "one of the comprehensive generalisations, called coexistence or succession." Now two things may be bound together in knowledge by the particular *fact* of their coexistence or succession, if that fact be perceived, but certainly cannot be bound together by the unperceived abstraction of coexistence or succession in general. Who would have thought it possible that such a use of abstractions should be made by one who was always warning us to beware of mistaking them for realities? *Et tu, Brute!*

J. S. Mill has seen very clearly that the fact of memory, or the continuity of consciousness, "brings us face to face with the central principle of our

intellectual nature." "The supposition of mental permanence," he tells us, "would admit of the same explanation as the permanence of the external world, and mind might be regarded as a mere series of feelings, with a background of possibility of feeling, *were it not for memory and expectation.* They are in themselves present feelings, but they involve a belief in more than their own existence. They cannot be adequately expressed without saying that I myself had, or shall have, them." With James Mill the belief that I have seen an object implies simply an association between the idea of the object and the idea of myself seeing it. But, as J. S. Mill shows, this will not account for the phenomenon in question; for no arbitrary association between the idea of myself and the idea of an object that I have not seen will lead to the belief that I have seen it. I remember that yesterday I was reading Mill's 'Logic.' Here the remembrance is an idea of myself reading that particular book. But this is not all; for I can frame an idea of myself reading the book to-morrow; and the latter idea could not possibly have the same certainty. In remembering that I read it yesterday, I am conscious that my idea represents a real fact, and that the same I, who am now apprehending the "idea" of that

fact, yesterday apprehended the "impression," and, *by reason of having apprehended both,* am competent to judge as to their agreement. Mill acknowledges that to account for belief in external objects and experienced facts, we must "postulate both expectation and memory, as data presupposed and built on, in every attempt to explain the more recondite phenomena of our being." Here he has unconsciously lighted on the ego. So in another place he says, "I means he who previously had such and such experience;" but the fact of the ego is neither explained nor done away with by using the third personal pronoun for the first. The difficulty in regard to the matter is (in one well-known passage) most honestly and clearly stated by him. "If we speak of the mind as a series of feelings which is aware of itself, as past and future, we are reduced to the alternative of believing that the mind, or ego, is something different from any series of feelings, or of accepting the paradox that something, which is, *ex hypothesi,* but a series of feelings, can be aware of itself as a series." In other words, the alternative bases of philosophy must be mystery or absurdity. This does not seem, however, to be a cogent reason for founding one's system upon the latter.

There is no greater inconceivability than that

there could be remembrance without a continuous subject to remember. Memory is that faculty of the ego by which it recognises reviewed impressions as representations of *its own* past experience. "Without such a faculty," as Dr Carpenter says, "reproductions of past states would only affect us like the successive phantasies in a play of the imagination."

Granting for a moment that feelings could be conscious of themselves, the knowledge of one another is not implied in this. Suppose that each of the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 was conscious of itself as I wrote it down, this could not give any of them a knowledge that it formed part of a series. Suppose a line of billiard-balls, each self-conscious, but with no principle of connection running through them, and suppose that motion is communicated to the first, transferred to the second, and so on,—in what possible way could the last be conscious of its connection with the others? It might as well be argued that a number of pearls could form a chain without something to bind them together, as that a number of self-conscious states could form a self-conscious series without some principle of continuity running through and connecting them. Without such a principle I see no more reason to suppose that one state could

know anything of another, than that I, by introspection, could remember the actions my father committed before I was born.

So far we have been dealing merely with the *existence* of an ego. We may know that it exists, because, unless it did, mental states could not possibly have existed. The Positive school admit that knowledge involves remembrance and the apprehension of resemblances and differences; and we have seen that these mental states are perfectly inconceivable except on the supposition of a permanent ego present to the different states remembered and contrasted. Further, we have seen that sensations which, according to the Positivists, form the raw material of all knowledge, can only be apprehended as such by means of a transition to different feelings. Since, then, this transition cannot be made by a feeling, which must cease in order to make it, we must postulate the existence of an ego to pass from the one mental state to the other. Hence even a single sensation demands the existence of a permanent subject to apprehend it. This is the point which I am chiefly concerned to maintain. Jacobi thought, and many seem to agree with him, that that only is proved for which there is found a *condition*. But I should rather say that that is pre-

eminently proved which is found *to be the necessary condition* of universally admitted existences.

We come now to the question, Can we, in addition to knowing that an ego *must* exist, know it *as* existing? We shall be less surprised at the difficulty which a man feels when "in quest of himself,"—to quote Abraham Tucker's expression, —if we remember that he has nearly the same difficulty when trying to reflect on any present feeling or thought. Hume seems to think he has annihilated the ego by the assertion, "I can never catch myself without an impression," forgetting that if a man catches himself with one there must be a self to catch, and that it is quite as difficult to catch the impression as the self; for the very effort to do so tends to make it disappear. Comte says that as soon as we begin to reflect on a feeling, the feeling itself has vanished. This is a somewhat exaggerated statement, for a second's reflection on the toothache, for example, does not generally prove a complete cure. But still reflection, even upon the toothache, will diminish the previous intensity of the pain: and the exact state of feeling which existed before reflection began no longer actually exists. Hence it is chiefly to representations in memory that we are indebted for a knowledge of our mental experience. Hamilton says we can

apprehend six things at once. I do not find the capabilities of my own mind nearly so great as this statement would make them. But even granting his position, it is still true that the whole of my experience,—with the exception of those six things,—is past or future. Hence, practically and ultimately, *all* our knowledge may be said to rest on faith in memory.

As memory plays such an important part in all our cognitions, we must be prepared that it should do the same in our cognition of self. Still, if I have never had a moment's knowledge of myself, I cannot possibly remember having had it; and we are here face to face with that most puzzling of problems—viz., how can the knower know himself? Writers on this subject often assume that the opposite of Ferrier's postulate is self-evidently true, as if we might justly say, "that which always knows can never, with its knowledge, have any knowledge of itself; or, in other words, that which must always be the knower can never be the known." This was pretty much Kant's view.

Though Herbert Spencer, in his 'Psychology,' adopts the ordinary positive notion that the ego is nothing but the transitory state of the moment, he has in his 'First Principles' forcibly stated the difficulties attaching to the theory of the non-

existence of a permanent ego. "What is it that thinks? Consciousness cannot be wholly resolved into impressions and ideas, since impressions of necessity imply something impressed; and again, how can the sceptic explain the fact that he thinks them as his? The fundamental condition of consciousness is the antithesis of object and subject. The mental act in which self is known, implies, like every other mental act, a perceiving subject and a perceived object. If, then, the object perceived is self, what is the subject perceiving? Or if it is the true self that thinks, what other self can it be that is thought of? A true cognition of self implies a state in which the knowing and the known are one, in which subject and object are identified, and this is the annihilation of both. So that the personality of which each is conscious, and of which the existence is to each a fact beyond all others most certain, is yet a thing which cannot be known at all; knowledge of it is forbidden by the very nature of thought."

But after having recognised the existence of an ego, he goes on to confuse that ego with the absolute, which cannot exist in relations. "The consciousness," he says, "of the unformed and unlimited is not the abstract of any one group of thoughts or ideas or conceptions, but of all; that

which is common to them all, and cannot be got rid of, is what is predicated by the term existence. The persistence of this element under successive conditions necessitates the sense of it as distinguished from them and independent of them. It remains an indefinite consciousness of something constant under all modes. It follows, therefore, that an ever-present sense of real, permanent existence is the very basis of our intelligence. By the laws of thought we are prevented from forming a conception of *absolute existence;* yet we are equally prevented from ridding ourselves of the consciousness of absolute existence. It has the highest validity of all, because it is the most persistent. Objective science proves that this reality cannot be what we think it; subjective science shows why we cannot think it as it is. Yet we are compelled to think it as existing. We have an indefinite consciousness of an absolute reality, transcending relations, which is produced by the absolute persistence in us of something which survives all changes of relation." This identification of the ego with the absolute is erroneous, and adds, therefore, quite unnecessarily to the difficulties of the discussion. The permanent something, of which we are conscious as persisting in and surviving all changes, is certainly not

a something that cannot exist in relation, for it exists *actu* in relation to the passing states. Nor is it properly likened to an indefinite and impersonal absolute, for our consciousness of persistence is the consciousness that *we* have persisted; in other words, it is the consciousness of our own personality.

Hence the only law of thought which keeps the ego from being known is the law that knowledge is impossible, except where there is the relation of subject and object. But on what ground has this law been laid down? Why should it be assumed that the reflex action of the subject is impossible? If we know ourselves, all knowledge *does not* involve the relation of subject *plus* object. That we do know ourselves seems undeniable; for personality is to all men, from Tennyson's Yorkshire farmer to Herbert Spencer, "the fact which is beyond all others the most certain." And if *less certain* facts are admitted into the category of knowledge, why should the most certain fact of all be excluded? True, we cannot understand *how* the subject can know itself; but can we understand how it can know the object? True, we can only dimly understand what the subject is; but can we do more in regard to the object? "In all probability," says De

Morgan in his 'Formal Logic,' "we should need new modes of perception in order to know mind as we know colour or motion." Certainly an intelligence, for whom the reflex knowledge of itself was the *same thing* as the objective knowledge of its states, could not be constituted as we are; but what reason is there to think that any such intelligence exists? Of the two assumptions that a rational being, capable of an infinitely progressive knowledge of objects, can never know itself, and that such a being must have some knowledge of itself, the latter hypothesis seems to be much more probable than the former, and it is supported by the *consensus gentium.* Men believe not only that they *know,* but that *they* know. The knowledge of self, or the relation of the subject to itself, is, after all, not more mysterious than the knowledge of other things, or the relation of subject to object. Nor are we more ignorant of the ultimate nature of ourselves than we are of the ultimate nature of a pebble or a primrose.

> "Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies,
> Hold you there, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower; but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is."

The word *consciousness,* which has unhappily

been employed with the greatest possible laxity, seems to me well fitted to express our knowledge of ourselves. Bain enumerates a number of different senses in which the word has been commonly used. 1. For sentient and intelligent life, as distinguished from unsentient existence. 2. Dugald Stewart defines consciousness as the immediate knowledge which the mind has of its sensations and thoughts and present operations, as opposed to the knowledge of the external world. 3. Bain, Hamilton, Mansel, Spencer, M'Cosh, &c., speak of the mind as conscious, even when engaged with the external world itself. 4. It is often used for strong and irresistible belief. But the word appears specially fitted for enabling us to express the knowledge we have of ourselves *along with our states.* In sensation we apprehend a feeling, in perception an object, in knowledge a proposition; but in consciousness we apprehend ourselves, along with these states, as their subject. In other words, we know that *we* know. It would be better, it seems to me, to use the word, not for the knowledge of states which we have along with ourselves, but for the knowledge of ourselves which we have along with the states.

I have said that I do not think consciousness,

or the apprehension of self, is combined with *every* mental phenomenon. In the case of pleasures and pains—especially the more intense ones—I seem clearly to apprehend myself as apprehending them; whereas in perception, still more in abstruse reflection, I am so engaged with the objective as to be, in the one case almost, and in the other altogether, unconscious of myself; though, afterwards, if I come to think of what happened by the aid of memory, I can discover that there must have been an "I" to perceive and reflect, and that the same I now drawing this inference was then engaged in an act of perception or reflection. But when I do apprehend myself as the subject of a mental state, I am *as certain* of my own existence as I am of the existence of the state. Both apprehensions are, I think, absolutely coexistent in time. I see no reason why the one should be called knowledge and the other ignorance. Again, I am as sure that certain events have been apprehended by me, and formed part of my conscious life, as I am that these events have happened. Hence "the permanent nexus, which is never itself a state of consciousness, but which holds states of consciousness together," does not seem to me to be legitimately called unknown. But of course a fully-developed consciousness of self—such a

consciousness as deserves the name of knowledge in the strictest sense of that word — can only result from many simple apprehensions of self, from the use of memory, comparison and reflection, from a fairly-developed knowledge of others, and from a clear perception of personal agency and aims.

The fact that the complete knowledge of self is a gradual acquisition removes an objection to the existence of the ego, raised by J. S. Mill—viz., that because in the first instant of our existence we have no conception of self, therefore the ego is a gratuitous fiction—a mere product of generalisation. Now of course we have no conception of *anything* in the first instant of our existence, nor in the first instant of its apprehension, inasmuch as a conception is only formed after several apprehensions have shown the object's most essential qualities. But a number of *non-apprehensions* of a thing could never lead to our forming a conception of it. Not even an infinite series of sensations or thoughts, in which no ego was present, could give us the conception of an ego that must be present to every sensation and thought. The early appearance of jealousy, however, would appear to indicate that a tolerably clear conception of self is not so long arising in the child's mind, as one might have expected it would be.

"The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is pressed
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that this is I.

But as he grows, he gathers much,
And learns the use of I and Me,
And finds I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch.

So rounds he to a separate mind,
From whence clear memory may begin,
As through the frame that bounds him in,
His isolation grows defined."

Before leaving this part of the subject, one other reason may be mentioned for believing in the permanence of the ego—a reason suggested by Mr Sidgwick in his 'Methods of Ethics.' We have a most intense conviction that *we* shall *ourselves* suffer or enjoy the consequences of our actions. All men sometimes refrain from certain deeds because of what must follow; and many men, for a long course of years, "rise up early and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness," to obtain, as they think for *themselves*, pleasure or money or fame. They certainly would not do this if they imagined that they were but working for future mental states, connected with certain present states, merely by sequence. If this were really the case, the most sensible motto for every

human being would be this, "Let me eat and drink, for next moment I die." Our firm expectation that *we* shall be related to certain future states can only be explained by the fact that our past experience has presented us with similar connections of causes and effects in the one selfsame ego.

Hence on many grounds we maintain that the ego is a real, though not a physical, existence. Without a permanent ego there could never have existed a single remembrance or cognition, nor even a sensation. These are the negative and hypothetical grounds of our belief. The positive ground is this: that we are sometimes conscious of ourselves; apprehending ourselves along with our states in the same indivisible moment of time; and that, after reflection upon these past experiences, we are able to form a conception of self not less distinct, at any rate, than are our conceptions of material objects.

Now comes the question, Can I discover anything about this self of mine beside the fact of its permanence? We think we shall have reason to see that we are conscious of ourselves as free and creative agents; beings, that is, whose volitions are not made for them, but created by them, as the result of reflection upon the motives of which they

are the subjects. We know not only that a volition has been formed, but that *we* have formed it.

The doctrine of a necessity in human actions, similar to the necessity obtaining in the external phenomena of nature, has been maintained by writers of very different schools upon most different grounds; some, like Jonathan Edwards, deducing it from the universality of the law of cause and effect; others, like Buckle, making it a matter of Baconian observation. We have the clearest and most elaborate explanation of the sensational theory of necessity in Bain's 'Emotions and Will.' The necessitarian theory of this school is based on the hypothesis that a human being consists only of a series of successive states, which cause one another, or are caused, by external influences; and volition with these thinkers only means the spontaneous rushing into full activity of the nascent nerve-force of an idea. We have already seen that such a succession of states is impossible and contradictory; but it will be instructive to study the subject from another point of view, as we must now do in examining this theory of volition.

Bain's account of the development of the will is a singularly ingenious piece of reasoning. But just like his theory of cognition, it is entirely vitiated by

his arguing throughout as if sensations were absolute objects not requiring and implying a correlative subject. The fundamental elements of will, he says, are (1) a spontaneous tendency to movement, which is the response of the system to nutrition; and (2) the link between a present feeling and certain muscular movements, whereby one comes under the control of the other. "We have only to suppose movements spontaneously begun and accidentally causing pleasure, and then we can understand that a few repetitions of the fortuitous concurrence of pleasure with a certain movement, will lead to the forging of an acquired connection, so that the pleasure or its idea shall at once evoke the proper movement." Now when Bain says, "Supposing such movements spontaneously begun and accidentally causing pleasure, then," &c., I ask, Causing pleasure to whom? In passing from movement to the pleasure resulting from it, Bain allows the ego of the metaphysician to slip in unobserved. And we have here an additional source of confusion. Not only are sensations and volitions commonly spoken of by writers like Bain as if they were things existing *per se*, or absolute objects, but often, as here, the subject of the state is imagined to be an object under the microscope of the physiologist. Bain's transition from movement to pleasure

seems to imply that he regards the matter thus. There is a visible motion in one part of the brain, and a *visible* pleasure (not a pleasure felt by any one, but a pleasure seen by the physiologist) in another part, and according to the law of brain action, by which two coexistent processes recall one another, there comes to be an inseparable association between the motion and the pleasure. It must be self-evident that this is no explanation of our *conscious* experience. But let us look at his theory somewhat in detail.

According to Bain, there is no characteristic form of consciousness for volition. A volition is merely the association between a desire, and the actions necessary for its accomplishment. "A simple but typical example of what takes place in all volition is to be found in the sucking infant. The sight of the breast becomes associated with the feeling of nourishment, and a volitional tie is established between this and the movements necessary for approaching it. The fancied unity of the voluntary power suggested by the appearance assumed by it in after-life, when we seem able to set going any action on the slightest wish, is the culmination of a vast range of detailed associations, whose history has been lost sight of. In vocal acquisitions we can see the truth of this theory—

the spontaneous commencement, repetition made each time with less difficulty; and lastly, the link complete. The ideal exertion, and a stimulus of pleasure or pain, lead to the occurrence of the real exertion. It is the property of our intellectual nature that for all purposes of action the remembrance or anticipation of a feeling can operate in the same way as its real presence." Now this may go far towards accounting for our being able to produce effects by means of our wills, but it is no account at all of the nature of the will itself.

I can best explain my meaning by a quotation from Dr Carpenter's 'Human Physiology': "Even in purely volitional movements, those prompted by a distinct effort of the will do not directly produce results, but play, as it were, on the automatic apparatus, by which the requisite nervo-muscular combination is brought into action. The training which develops the inarticulate cry of the infant into human language consists in fixing the attention on the audible result desired, the selection of that one of the imitative efforts to produce it which is most nearly successful, and the repetition of this till it has become habitual, or secondarily automatic. The will can thenceforward reproduce any sound once acquired by calling on the automatic apparatus for the particular combination of

movements which it has grown into the power of executing in respondence to each preconception. What we will is not to throw this or that muscle into contraction, but to produce a certain preconceived result. Otherwise we should need to know what the muscles are, and how to combine them intentionally; but even an anatomist is no better able than the completest ignoramus to execute a movement he has never practised. The relation between the automatic activity of the body and the volitional direction may be compared to the locomotive power of a horse under guidance of a skilful rider. It is not the rider's whip and spur that furnished the power, but the nerves and muscles of the horse; and when these have been exhausted no further action can be got out of them even by the sharpest stimulation. But the rate and direction of the movement are determined by the will of the rider. Sometimes, it is true, an unusual excitement calls forth the essential independence of the equine nature, and the horse runs away with his master, just as in spasms and convulsions the voluntary muscles are thrown into violent contractions in spite of voluntary resistance. On the other hand, the horse can find its way home, whilst its master is lost in reverie, just as our own legs can do.

And the training of the horse corresponds to the training of our automatic mechanism, the result required being indicated to the learner, every effort that tends to produce it being encouraged and fixed by repetition, and every unsuitable action repressed." Bain has really, it seems to me, explained nothing more than this automatic element in volitional action.

"A desire for a certain pleasure," says Bain, "and an idea of how to get it, are the two elements that account for and constitute volition; the first calls forth the necessary energy, the second guides it into the right channels, and the volition is the immediate connection between the two." But the mystery of volition really lies a step further back—viz., *in the being* who desires an end, and has an idea of the means to the end. There are, we must repeat, no such things as ideas or desires *per se*. If it be said that corresponding to the desire there is a molecular motion in one part of the brain, and corresponding to the idea a molecular motion in another part, I do not deny it; I think it is probably the case. But if these motions could actually be seen by the physiologist, they could not possibly account, by themselves, for their supposed effects. He would see one motion producing another; but I, the con-

scious subject, am not conscious of motions, and were it not for the physiologist, I should never have known that there were any motions at all. It does not follow, however, because sentient creatures exist as the necessary percipients of desires and ideas that therefore they are free. It might be that they were only capable of receiving the effects of the cerebral movements. It might be that they were compelled to determine on attaining every object desired, by making actual the ideal representation of the means. Is this the case with man?

The will, Bain admits, can suppress emotions "through the operations of its own voluntary muscles." It suppresses, first, the actual movements that accompany emotion, and this tends to the suppression of the nervous currents that excite them. But he does not tell us whence the desire, or stimulation of pleasure, is to come, which, according to his own theory, is an essential prerequisite to any such attempt at suppression. There can be no association between an emotion, and an idea that tends to suppress it; and even if there were, it would not account for the fact that the former gradually grows weaker and the latter stronger. Can any explanation be given of this fact except that it is due to the voluntary activity

of the ego? "In attention," says Bain, "the force of the will is set in array against the power of the intellectual associations, and depends on the earnestness of my purpose—that is, the strength of motive growing out of some pleasure or pain present or apprehended. As soon as the incongruity of an idea with what we are seeking for is seen, the tendency is for the idea to vanish forthwith from the mind. The conscious ego consists of one or more states, each of which causes other adhering states to follow, and others of which determine whether these shall remain." If there be no metaphysical ego, these states are absolute objects. Now, can anything be more ludicrous or contradictory than the conception of *several* of these absolute objects, none of which persist, but one of which dismisses all that are incongruous with itself? If Professor Bain should say that this representation of his views is a misrepresentation, let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that he really means by a state some one conscious of itself and its affections. Then if the ego at any moment consists of only one such state, as soon as it is past there must be another ego; (for, according to his theory, there is nothing which persists between state and state:) hence there would be nothing to connect two suc-

cessive states, and so there would be no possibility of memory. On the other hand, if we say the ego consists of several such states, we involve ourselves in the difficulties that arise from supposing several egos at once, which can know nothing of one another (since there is no principle of continuity running through them), still less of the combination of egos that precede or follow them.

"Deliberation," says Bain, "is the voluntary act under a concurrence or complication of motive-forces. During the moments of suspended action (suspended because the forces are equal) the current of thought brings forward some new motive. I know from experience that it is dangerous to carry into effect the result of the first combat of opposing forces, and the apprehension of evil consequences is a stimulant of the will like any other pain. A well-trained intellect, at the end of the proper time, gives way to the side that then appears the strongest. The well-disciplined deliberative will resists the promptings of the strongest side till nothing new any longer presents itself. An educated activity, motives to the will, and an intelligence to represent these motives, when they are not actual pleasures and pains, and to harmonise our successive operations, are the general foundation of those multifarious movements that

constitute the stream of our active life." In what way it is possible to conceive myself as possessing an intelligence that harmonises the operations of my life, without conceiving of myself as a permanent ego different from the succession of my states, I am unable to comprehend. Here, as elsewhere, the ego which is theoretically denied is practically assumed. Bain, however (and in this he is more persistent and consistent than most others of the same school), always endeavours to represent man as a passive percipient of the drama of his own life. In deliberating, he is merely the subject of thoughts, each of which may, or may not, have other thoughts adhering to it. If they have, new motives are brought to bear upon the man, but this is only due to the spontaneously associative processes of his brain. In common, however, with all who support the doctrine of necessity, he sometimes contradicts himself in representing "the well-trained deliberate will" as "waiting till the proper time, and then giving way to what appears the strongest motive." Man's actions, then, cannot be said to be merely the effects of casual succession of states, exactly in the same way as the products of a machine are the result of a casual succession of forces. A machine does not wait "till the proper time," and

then "give way to what appears the strongest motive." This difference between man and nature, between the physical and metaphysical, a difference that seems to me as broad as the universe itself, is mentioned by Professor Bain without his ever perceiving that it is a difference at all. This fact will for ever prove there is something in the world other than the physical and phenomenal, and will for ever prevent the production of a consistent philosophy when man is considered merely as one of the processes of nature.

Very much of our mental life, no doubt, is quite independent of volition. The power of the brain to retain impressions and suggest ideas is proportional to its quality and conformation, and upon these circumstances will depend, to some extent, the capabilities of the ego, just as a workman's skill depends largely upon the tools with which he is supplied. Further, the brain of every new-born infant has lessons, or the material for lessons, latent in it and impressed upon it. It can draw

> "From treasures stored by generations past,
> In winding chambers of receptive sense."

The law that an impression once made is easily revived applies not only to each single brain, but to brains connected by natural descent. It is in

this way, as Herbert Spencer has shown, that many truths which are *a posteriori* for the race, are *a priori* for the individual. There is an innate capacity in the brain, as he would perhaps say, for recognising these truths, or, as I should prefer putting it, for the reproduction of those molecular changes which are prerequisite for the recognition of these truths by the ego. Moreover, much of our mental work is undoubtedly carried on by the aid of unconscious cerebration. "It is possible," says Dr Carpenter, "to read or write for hours by automatic action, the will being called into play only when fatigue or distraction renders it difficult to keep the attention. Even in man intellectual operations of a high order may go on automatically, one state of consciousness calling forth another without volition; and ideational and emotional states may express themselves in muscular action without or against volition."

The difference between recollection and reminiscence affords a striking illustration of the difference between automatic and volitional action. "Often," as Miss Cobbe says, "after trying in vain to recall a name, we deliberately turn away, not intending to abandon the pursuit, but as if possessed of an obedient secretary, whom we could order to hunt up what we wanted," and who, as Dr Carpenter

adds, "is more likely to find what we want when we leave him to search for it in his own way, instead of worrying him to look into this, that, or the other place for it." It really seems as if our conscious and volitional interference were in such a case misplaced. At any rate, we see clearly that there are two distinct ways of going to work, and two distinct kinds of remembrance,—viz., the involuntary (or memory), where one idea calls up another, we being merely the passive recipients or percipients of both; and the voluntary (or reminiscence), when we actually *search* for a particular missing idea. This distinction is as old as Aristotle, who used the terms μνήμη and ἀνάμνησις; but it seems to me in danger of being lost again, at any rate by Professor Bain and his school. The difference is great and important. The lower animals must have memory, but there is no reason to think they possess the faculty of reminiscence. Memory chiefly depends on the brain, as may be seen from the story that Coleridge relates of a servant-girl who was able to speak correct Hebrew in a state of fever, merely because she had formerly heard her master reciting Hebrew sentences. Recollection, on the other hand, consists essentially in the voluntary fixing of attention on an idea already present to the mind. This act of attention serves

to intensify the idea itself, and so to intensify its associative powers. Attention, deliberation, and suspense themselves imply volitions. The ego is able not merely to resolve on initiating a course of conduct, which reflection has shown to be good or desirable, but it can determine to refrain from the initiation, until such time as reflection has shown its goodness or desirability. In either case we have volitions, or exercises of activity originating in the ego. Carpenter shows that in certain abnormal conditions of the brain, produced by disease or stimulants, and in the case of individuals such as Coleridge, through whose minds ideas flow in continuous streams, but unsolicited, and without any fixed order, the power of volitional control is small or *nil*. In these cases the brain seems to be inefficient as an instrument of will. The difference between automatic and volitional action is sometimes strikingly shown by the difference in their results. Compare, *e.g.*, the works of Hegel with those of Coleridge.

The distinction between the voluntary and involuntary exercise of thought, and between its physiological and psychological aspects, is well stated by R. S. Wyld, in his 'Physics and Philosophy of the Senses': "1. The brain, in order that it may be a fitting organ of the mind, has a natural

tendency to repeat any series of changes which it has once acquired. 2. These cerebral actions are the symbols of thought, but they are no more thought itself than the sentences of a book. 3. We must assume the presence of an intelligent principle to interpret the symbols, or we cannot conceive thought to exist. 4. Though the brain may follow a certain involuntary course of action, and may thus suggest to the mind a train of thought, we know that the mind has the power of controlling the cerebral action. We can interrupt one chain of thought and start another—out of a variety of thoughts we can reject those that are the most pressing."

Now let us ask what we mean, or should mean, by freedom. Bain says "it is surprising that the connection between motives and actions should ever have been questioned, since every human being every day of his life is practically depending on its truth." The connection *ought not* to have been questioned. What should be denied is that there is an absolutely necessary connection between this motive and that action. So far as men possess the same nature, the influence of motives upon them will be similar. Reason, as Mr Grote said, is "a deindividualising principle." Therefore, so far as men are rational, they will be similarly influenced

by similar motives. When men have lost their reason or their will, their actions will of course be irrationally and involuntarily determined by motives, just as if they were mere objects in the external world. Mr Buckle's argument against freedom (it may be remarked in passing) that a certain number of persons *must* always be guilty of certain crimes, because a certain number always *are*, applies mainly to those who, by a long course of bad habits, have practically lost that will which they once possessed, and have thus become legitimate subjects for the statistician. Mansel stoutly denies the predictability of human actions. I incline to think that, in all but absolutely perfect or absolutely imperfect beings, there would now and again be an element of caprice which could not be foreseen except by omniscience. But even if we allow, with Kant and others, that human actions are not essentially unpredictable, the difference between freedom and necessity does not lie in the fact of predictability or unpredictability, which is only another aspect of the old puzzle about foreknowledge. The difference is this. I commit an action by necessity, if I am made to commit it by the forces which I have no power either temporarily or permanently to resist. I commit an action freely, if I am

endowed with the power of refraining from it till reflection has convinced me of its desirability, and with the power, after such reflection and conviction, of determining to commit it. In the latter case, even if at last I act in accordance with the motives originally presented, the volition, and so the action, is caused not by the motives but by me.

The doctrine of necessity has received its chief support from the use of the word "motive," which, when understood literally, sweeps away all opposing arguments by assuming the point to be proved —viz., that man *is* moved in the same way as the objects in external nature. What Stirling calls "a judicious playing on the word motive" has made the work of the necessitarians uncommonly easy. It is a term, however, that has no business in the discussion, until, at any rate, it has been qualified by the assertion that it is used in a *figurative* sense. Suppose a man in a hurry to keep an important engagement, and that a violent wind is blowing dead against him. It seems to me simply absurd to apply the same name of motive to the physical wind which drives him back, and to the psychical remembrance of his engagement, after reflection on which he urges himself forward. There is no such analogy as the word motive suggests between the movements

of a machine and the action of an ego. It is said that whatever has motives brought to bear upon it, must move in proportion to the strength and direction of the motives; which is true enough in the physical sphere, but which is the very question in dispute regarding mind. "That the will is *influenced* by motives," says Mr Sidgwick, "no one denies; but to compare that influence to a physical cause, followed by an invariable antecedent, is to confound things essentially different." As Reid puts it, motives cannot determine and plan and resolve, &c. If a number of forces be brought to bear upon a machine, it must at once involuntarily yield to the resultant of their combined influences. But when a number of motives are presented to an ego, he need not, in fact he generally does not, yield at once to any of them; he can pause, he can reflect, he can call up new and more powerful motives. Supposing that there is a motive for me to go out of doors, and another to remain in my easy-chair, if the analogy so often insisted on were correct, the resultant of these forces might move me into the middle of the room or precipitate me from the window. But every one sees that the idea of a psychological parallelogram of forces is absurd. Physical and psychical motives have

nothing in common. The weight of the latter is imponderable; their force is immaterial; their effects depend not so much upon their inherent power, as upon the influence which the ego chooses to concede them. In a word, psychical motives are *reasons*, by reflection upon which an ego may have recourse to self-adjustment, but not forces by which he is involuntarily adjusted. Nay, if the word motive must be used, we will go so far as to maintain that a man may sometimes act according to the weakest motive. When, for instance, a human being is influenced on the one side by a wild and delirious temptation, and on the other by the still small voice of conscience, it is possible for him to act according to the suggestions of the latter; but he who says this is the strongest motive must be willing to admit that the zephyr may be more powerful than the whirlwind. "A volition," according to Herbert Spencer, "is a discharge of nervous force along a line which experience has rendered the line of least resistance." But it is not always so. The most inveterate habits are not quite irresistible, for they are sometimes resisted; and when they are conquered, the nervous force must be discharged along the line of *greatest* resistance. If the figurative sense of the word motive be taken into account, then we

can say with Stirling that "a man is free *because* he obeys motives"—*i. e.*, because he has reasons presented to him, and the power of reflecting on them. As Mansel remarks, "Consciousness, rightly interpreted, repudiates both extreme theories, that of an irresistible determinant, and that of an arbitrary will, altogether uninfluenced by motives. The alternative motives are manifested in consciousness as both influencing but neither compelling. The importance of will consists not in being uninfluenced, but in the power of determining which of the influences shall prevail."

This explanation removes at once several of the stock objections to human freedom. Hamilton says, for example, that if the will is not determined by motives, volitions must be motiveless, and this would give us casualism. Of course an uncaused volition is as absurd a supposition as an uncaused desire. But it does not follow that a volition is motiveless because not caused by a motive. It may be caused by an ego in accordance with the motive. Again, he says in reference to Reid, "it makes no difference whether motives determine a man to act, or determine a man to determine himself." In the word determine there is the same sort of ambiguity which we have noticed in the word motive. It makes

all the difference whether they determine a man so that he cannot but determine himself, or whether they only influence him, leaving him free to act in accordance with, or against, them. If it is in his power to wait for new motives, and to direct his attention to this motive or to that, by which process of attention the relative strength of the motives can be altered, the "determination" of the motives, though it be influential, is certainly not irresistible.

Many of the difficulties about freedom and necessity result from the careless use of abstract words. The freedom of the will is a misleading and a tautological expression. Will, or the power of choice, if it exist, must be free. A necessitated will is a contradiction in terms. This seems sufficiently evident. But the unfortunate phrase, "free-will," has led Hamilton and others into the fallacy mentioned in the last paragraph. It led Mansel into a yet more curious mistake. Though he traced the origin of the idea of power to "myself determining my volitions," he yet denies that our volitions can be the results of causes. He does so on this ground. My only notions of cause are (1) the exertion of power by an intelligent being, and (2) uniform sequence; "and to say that our volitions were caused in the first way would be

Fatalism, and in the second Determinism." It is true that to say my volition was caused by an intelligent being *other than myself* would be Fatalism; but it is equally manifest that if the intelligent being who causes it is myself, we have Freedom.

Let me try to analyse my consciousness in a complex case of volition. I am affected by a certain desire which prompts me to do, and to do at once, a certain thing. I am conscious that I can say to myself either, "Very well, I will do it;" or, "Can I afford it? Would it be right? Would it be wise? Would it be kind? Would it really make me happy?" If I take the latter course, numerous ideas spring up in my mind, each of which may be called a motive, having some rational weight in assisting me to a decision. At last I perceive that such a course would be best, or at any rate that I should really like it, whereupon I determine to set about it, though I am all the while conscious that I could still refrain, or even act, in the opposite way. "I am convinced," says J. S. Mill, "that I could have chosen the other course had I preferred it, but not that I could have chosen one while I preferred the other." Be it so. But for my part I am also conscious that I was not obliged to choose at that particular instant, that I could have waited a little longer, and that unless it were something

which a rational being could never rationally prefer, I could have argued with myself till I did prefer it. Owing to the power of attention, we need never be ultimately affected by impressions exactly in proportion to their original strength. It is a law of our nature that a desire can be increased if it be attentively regarded, and diminished if attention be withdrawn from it. And this exercise of attention is the prerogative of every ego.

The supposed *consciousness* of freedom has been often treated as a mental illusion. Bain is no doubt right in saying that originally the notion of freedom was a mere metaphorical compliment, bestowed by the Stoics upon their ideal wise man, who was called free, just in the same way as he was called king, or beautiful, or rich. But Bain is not right, as I think, in saying that "we are no more conscious of freedom than we are conscious of the double decomposition of salts." All I can say is, I find it in my consciousness, and it does not yield to any analysis—not even the able analysis of Professor Bain. The reason why he does not find it in his, is, I apprehend, because he does not find consciousness at all, in the sense in which I use that word—viz., for the knowledge of self. If there be no ego, I cannot, of course, be conscious of myself; and if I am not con-

scious of myself, I cannot be conscious of myself as free.

"Liberty," says Hume," is a certain looseness or indifference which we feel in passing or not passing from the idea of one object to that of a succeeding one. Now we may observe, that though in reflecting on human actions we seldom feel such a looseness or indifference, but are commonly able to infer them from the motives and dispositions of those who perform them with considerable certainty, yet it frequently happens that, in *performing* the actions themselves, we are sensible of something like it. This has been used as a demonstration, and even an intuitive proof, of human liberty." It very well may be. For what is this "looseness or indifference" but the consciousness that we are able to act in either of two ways, and are not necessitated to either of them? "We feel," he says, "that our actions are subject to our will on most occasions, and imagine we feel the will itself is subject to nothing, because when by a denial of it we are provoked to try, we feel that it moves easily every way, and produces an image of itself (a velleity as it is called in the schools), even on that side on which it did not settle. This image, or faint notion, we persuade ourselves could at that time have been completed into the thing

itself; because, should that be denied, we find on a second trial that at present it can. We consider not that the fantastical desire of showing liberty is here the motive of our action." As to the will being "subject to nothing," these words really convey no intelligible meaning. We have seen it is the ego and not the will which should be spoken of as free or necessitated. At any rate, the "fantastical desire of showing liberty" is not the only thing that makes us sensible of our past freedom. Remorse bears strong testimony to the same fact. It is in vain that Hume, Spinoza, and others tell us self-reproach is a mistake. We know better. We feel that we might have done the opposite to what we did. Nor is self-reproach the peculiar idiosyncrasy of fools; on the contrary, it is to be found in the purest, the wisest, the noblest of the race, and is only altogether absent from those who have become irretrievably degraded. We never think (except in our philosophical systems) of attributing men's actions to desire, preference, or motive, in such a way as that, upon the grounds of this attribution, they themselves must be exempted from praise or blame. As Butler shows, even if men are *not* free, we must always, for practical purposes, assume that they are.

Mr Sully, in his 'Sensation and Intuition,'

denies that we have any consciousness of freedom in regard to either the present or the past. He maintains that the idea arises merely from a natural pride, which leads us to look upon our *future* actions as determinable by ourselves. But if we have, as I have tried to show, a consciousness of freedom in the present, and a remembrance of freedom in the past—if we have, as Hume admits, "a feeling of looseness or indifference in performing actions," our expectation of future freedom is capable of a different explanation.

Kant also denied our consciousness of freedom, and maintained that the idea was only a transcendental deduction from the categorical imperative. There can be no doubt, however, that the whole doctrine of transcendental freedom was really suggested to him by his consciousness of his own freedom. He justly says that if there is a transcendental character only behind *some* phenomena — viz., human, we must have learnt the difference from experience, and experience can give us only (so he thought) contingent truths. Hence he tells us, we must conceive of the transcendental character and freedom as applicable to all phenomena alike. But it is manifest that our conceiving of it as applicable to all phenomena alike, does not save it from the accusation of

having been, prior to the conception, suggested by our conscious experience.

It seems to me that all the attempts which have been made to disprove our consciousness of freedom have failed as signally as those which have sought to disprove our consciousness of our own permanence. For my own part, at any rate, I am conscious of myself, not only as a being capable of feeling and of receiving the ideas that are presented to me, but capable also of a voluntary exercise of attention, and a voluntary *origination* of a train of thought or a course of conduct. The free act of an ego is a creative act, and does not therefore involve, as Jonathan Edwards and Hamilton assert, an infinite number of previous volitions. After I have reflected on what I want, what I ought to want, what I am likely to attain, and what is the best means of attaining it, I am conscious of forming a determination or volition to do certain things. Every such volition originates, or rather I, as often as I am the author of such a volition, originate, a new train of thoughts, or a new set of events, or both. This volition sets agoing the requisite movements in the brain, which may then either go on automatically for a considerable time, or may require to be supplemented by fresh volitional causes and cerebral effects. What

is the exact nature of the connection between the will and the brain does not, for our present purpose, very much matter. Dr Carpenter says, "The intensity of any ideational state is an expression of hyperæmic condition of some part of the cerebrum, as that of a sensational state is of the sensorium. All volitional action is based on an idea of what is to be done. It seems clear that the same vaso-motor action, which is the condition of attention to that idea, will, if excited to produce a still greater local hyperæmia, give effect to it in a spontaneous motorial discharge." But it must be carefully remembered that the volition is neither the intensification of the hyperæmic condition nor the motorial discharge that is consequent thereon. It precedes both. The volition is *not made for* an ego by motion in the brain, but is the outcome of its own activity. I create a volition for myself in "the abysmal depths of personality," which, because it cannot be placed on the dissecting-table, has been declared non-existent.

It is the consciousness of our ability to create volitions that gives us our idea of power. That we have such an idea is very evident. The ablest treatise written to disprove it assumes it as the basis of proof. Hume tries to demonstrate that we have no notion of power by attempting to show that there

is something—viz., habit, *capable of producing* it. And of course whatever is capable of producing anything has power, according to the ordinary use of that word. Now, whence could we have received this idea of power, if not from the conscious exercise of will?

It seems to me somewhat unfortunate that the upholders of human freedom have tried to trace the notion of power to our consciousness of *effort.* "Effort," says Bain, "is the muscular consciousness that accompanies voluntary activity, especially in the painful stages. It has been supposed that here we have mechanical power originating in purely mental agency, and that hence volition was the source of all motive power. But it is not the consciousness of effort, but well-digested meals, that enables the labourer to do his work. The concurring consciousness of expended power is no more the cause of that power than the illumination cast by the engine-furnace is the source of the movements generated. It is strange that the consciousness of effort should be deemed the cause of voluntary movements, because when the power is at its greatest the effort is null, and *vice versa.* The feeling of effort is the symptom of declining energy, the proof that the true antecedent—viz., the organic state of nerves and muscles—is on

the eve of exhaustion." Mill argues to the same effect—that the fact of *nisus* or effort being involved in the idea of power, proves that idea to be concerned rather with the relation of our volitions to our muscles than of ourselves to our volitions.

There is a good deal of weight in these objections. It seems to me that the ideas of power and effort are really, as Bain says, contrary to one another. The muscular sense of effort is a sign that, though we have been exerting some power, we are not possessed of all the power that is necessary for our purpose. I have a consciousness of power in creating a volition, but a sense of effort in carrying it out. It is in the conflict between my power, as manifested in volition, and the resistance of my organism and its environment, that the sense of effort arises. I think it is better to say, therefore, that in effort we are conscious, not of power, but of insufficient power.

The real mystery of the will is to be looked for—not in the relation between the volition and the muscles — but in the relation between the volition and the ego. There is no more reason to seek for power in the muscles than to look for skill in an artist's brushes and colours. The muscles and the colours are the instruments in

both cases. Herbert Spencer says that the only force we can know is the force of which we are conscious during our muscular efforts; and he thinks that there is a necessary illusion by which we are obliged to suppose similar forces behind the external phenomenon that resist us. This, he says, is the only conception of causality open to us. Yet this fails; because if the force in a chair, for example, were like our own, the chair must be conscious of sensations as I am. I have never experienced the "necessary illusion" to which Spencer refers. I never suppose muscular exertion in chairs or in any external phenomena. My notion of power in material objects, *regarded otherwise than metaphysically*, is purely negative. It is that of something, I know not what, which offers resistance,—of something which produces results, I know not how.

If the doctrine of necessity were true, we must regard ourselves as merely the passive recipients of impressions and ideas. When we were in a state of what is called deliberation, we should be conscious only of waiting to see which motive would eventually be the strongest. It is possible to form a conception of a conscious being devoid of will. Most animals probably possess it only in its minimum form of determination to obtain, as

soon as possible, the object of any present desire. And we can imagine a watch that is conscious but not free. Suppose there was within it a sentient principle which could hear the ticking, and observe the motion of the wheels, and desire a regular kind of existence. It might be able to perceive dust accumulating in its interior, and it might remember from its past experience the periodical cleanings which the dust rendered necessary. Such a watch might know, and even foreknow, a good deal about its own condition, but it could in no respect *alter* it. Whether it went faster or slower, got dirty sooner or later, was cleaned often or seldom, &c., might be to it matters of interest and anxiety, but unless it had a faculty different from feeling or knowledge—and Bain expressly declares that volition is not different—it would for ever be incapable of self-adjustment. Such a piece of mechanism is man, according to Professor Bain. Some such sort of existence has occasionally been attributed to him. "Just as the blush," we are told, "is no more than a bodily expression, so our will is no more than another kind of expression of a certain condition of the brain. Our bodily actions proceed from physical changes in our brain, just as the motion of a bell results from the touch upon the

handle. As for our will, it is but the signal of what has been going on in our brain—just as the sound of the bell tells you it has been moved. To say that the will causes the action is as absurd as to say that the bell's sound causes the bell's motion." If this be true, our whole existence is as much the sport of chance as the motion of the spray driven before the wind. Here we are forcibly reminded of the words of Professor Ferrier: "Philosophers undisturbed have pondered over man's nature, and after all what have they made of it? What sort of a picture have they presented to our observation? Not the picture of a man, but the representation of an automaton —that is what it cannot help being,—a phantom dreaming what it cannot but dream,—an engine performing what it must perform,—an incarnate reverie,—a weather-cock shifting helplessly in the winds of sensibility,—a wretched association machine through which ideas pass linked together by laws over which the machine has no control;—anything in short, but that free and self-sustained centre of underived activity which we call man."

One reason of this misrepresentation of man's nature may be found in the one-sidedness that almost always follows great success. Science has revealed to us an infinite number of invari-

able sequences, brought about by the operation of what seem to be involuntary laws; and it has been proved that, though we search over millions of miles and space, and millions of years of time, we shall see the same forces producing the same phenomena. Hence many scientists have jumped to the hasty conclusion that the same laws of invariable sequence must apply to everything in the universe, even to mind itself. "The progress of science," says Professor Huxley, "in all ages, has meant the extension of the province of what we call matter and causation, and the concomitant gradual banishment from all regions of human thought of what we call spirit and spontaneity." But the Professor admits "that a human being is, if he be a machine, capable within certain limits of self-adjustment;" and it is admitted by all that he is capable within certain limits of the adjustment of the environment. If, therefore, the progress of science has consisted in throwing into the shade this fact of adjustment, which is the most important and significant of all facts, so much the worse for science. As Maurice very well says, "Whatever may be the value of the things handled and tasted and seen, I who handle and taste and see them, am at least as interesting to myself as they."

The scientific argument against the doctrine of free-will—viz., that all events, except perhaps human volitions, are necessarily related to events immediately preceding them, has imposed even on so cautious a writer as Mr Sidgwick, who mentions it as an argument really favouring the necessitarian view. One would have thought that it was manifestly an argument against that view. Man, since he is "the interpreter of Nature," might *a priori* be supposed not to form merely a part of her processes, and hence it might be expected beforehand that *his* actions and *Nature's* would not be amenable to the same canons. Scientists often lose sight of the fact that in some small degree we ourselves have been able to alter the course of nature, and by combining its invariable laws to bring about the variations in their action which was desired. Forgetting this fact, though it is the one thing which makes our life of any value, some philosophers have been gradually tending towards the categorical denial of God, and of man (properly so called), and of everything else that cannot be discovered "by the methods and formulæ of physics." "I have swept the heavens with my telescope, and have not found a God," said Lalande. "We have examined the brain with our microscopes, and have not found an ego,"

say the physiologists. Hence God and the ego must be declared non-existent, since they do not come within the focus of these all-devastating lenses. All-devastating, we say; for a universe that contains only necessitated and meaningless phenomena is "an abomination of desolation," worse than that spoken of by the prophet.

J. S. Mill tells us what a paralysing and depressing effect the doctrine of necessity long had upon himself, and how he often wished that it could simply be held *quasi* the character of others. But he says that he escaped from its injurious influences by guarding against the misleading associations of the word necessity. He distinguished necessity from fatalism. The former, he says, means only that an action will inevitably happen if our desire be sufficiently strong, and if there be nothing external to prevent it; the latter, that it must happen whether we desire it or not. He admits, however, that though "necessity is remote from fatalism, most necessitarians are probably fatalists." "The true doctrine of necessity," he says, "while maintaining that our character is formed by our circumstances, asserts at the same time that our desires can do much to alter our circumstances." The desire, therefore, to alter our character is one of the circumstances by which the

character is being moulded. The feeling of being able to modify our characters, if we wish it, is the feeling of freedom; and this ennobling part of the doctrine of free-will is equally implied, Mill thinks, in the doctrine of necessity. "A person is free who feels that his habits and temptations are not his masters but he theirs, who, even in yielding, knows that he could resist, that there is not required for this purpose a greater desire than he is capable of feeling." But the question is, How is that desire to be obtained? If "feeling" means getting or creating, then here is the difference between a man and a machine. If, though he is capable of feeling it, he is incapable of getting it, then he is not free; nor on this supposition can it be explained why he feels that he *is* free. Freedom, properly understood, does not consist in a man's being made to act by internal motives rather than by external; this would be merely what Kant calls "the freedom of a turnspit." Unless there be an ego, which can voluntarily attend to one idea, and draw away its attention from another, irrespective of the inherent strength with which those ideas originally present themselves, and even call up a third which does not present itself at all, there is no possibility of our obtaining a desire which we have not already got, nor, therefore, of our

being anything but that which we are *made to be.*

On the whole, it seems to me that, when the errors arising from ambiguities of language have been removed, when it has been clearly recognised that an ego is the necessary substrate of psychical states, and when consciousness is correctly analysed, the fact of freedom can be established. In other words, the ego is not merely passively acted on by the brain, but is also capable of voluntary action upon the brain.

This, then, is the beginning of metaphysics. To find that I am conscious of myself as a permanent being, in contradistinction from my changing thoughts and feelings, and to find that I am capable, not only of apprehending feelings and thoughts, but of creating volitions and originating thereby series of events. Consciousness reveals to us something more than the phenomenal, it reveals to us substance; something more than invariable sequence, it reveals to us power. This substance and power must be pre-eminently real, since without them feelings and thoughts and self-adjustments could neither be nor be conceived to be.

Can any such substance and power be discovered behind what we are accustomed to call

nature? This is the last and greatest problem of metaphysics.

We cannot here discuss the question of our perception of an external world, suffice it to say that it seems altogether inconceivable how, from the mere association of *sensations*, the notion of *externality* could ever have been formed. As Bain has so ably shown, a thing is only known by being contrasted with its foil. Waiving the objection that by the sensational school sensations are supposed to be associated *in nothing*, or to be associated in a fluent brain, no particle of which ever long remains the same—and allowing them to assume, as we have seen they so often tacitly do assume, a sentient principle by which the sensations may be received,—how could the coexistences and successions of sensations *within* this principle ever suggest to it that there was anything *without?* Yet this is the only explanation which the school has to offer. When we seem to be carried out of ourselves to the world beyond, we are merely referred, they tell us, "from one of our sensations to others, from a single member of a cluster to the rest, from what we actually feel in one sense to what, in suitable positions, we might feel in the others. When we attribute whiteness to snow, we say that a particu-

lar sensation belongs to a group, the remainder of which, colour, softness, sparkle, &c., are expressed by the word snow." Mill adopts Bain's theory that it is the muscular sensations accompanying locomotion which give us the idea of externality, and lead us to attribute all our sensations to an external cause. But *even these* sensations are within us: and it is inconceivable how any number of associated internalities can ever produce the idea of externality. It seems to me that it is from the consciousness of our volition having been resisted that our knowledge of the external world arises. Moreover, inasmuch as we cannot conceive of impotence resisting power, it is natural to regard the external world (our own organism included, since this often resists our volition) as the seat of force. Now my volitions are, as I think, the outputtings of my own essential personality; is there any ground for associating with Will the power that seems to underlie natural phenomena?

There has been for many years an increasing tendency on the part of scientific men to resolve matter into force. The secondary qualities are universally admitted to arise from differences in molecular vibrations, which produce corresponding differences in the nervous organism. Sir Wm.

Thomson has seen reason to believe that resistance also, which is the fundamental primary quality, is nothing but the result of an extremely rapid motion of something infinitely soft and yielding. Clifford, again, says: "We know with great probability that wherever there is an atom there is a small electric current. Very many of the properties of atoms are explained by this; and we have vague hopes that they all will be. If so, we shall say an atom is a small current." The dynamical theory of matter — the theory, viz., that matter ultimately consists of atomic centres of force—is favoured by writers of very different schools: for example, Boscovitch, Newton, Faraday, Thomson, Tait, Clifford, Picton, R. S. Wyld, &c. The supposition that matter really consists of a number of centres of energy, capable of interpenetration, seems more intelligible than that which makes it consist of mutually exclusive particles. The doctrine of chemical equivalents, and the fact that when bodies unite in more than one proportion these combinations rise by exact multiples of the first, appear strongly to point to the atomic theory in some form. On the other hand, that a new compound could ever be produced from a mixture of atoms which were not ultimately interpenetrable (as, for example, water from oxygen and hydro-

gen), seems quite inconceivable. Again, on the dynamical theory, the effects of gravity, cohesion, &c., can be understood as resulting from the interaction or interpenetration of unextended forces, and so we shall avoid the special difficulties supposed to be connected with action at a distance. Further, if the body consist, not of a mass of forceless atoms, but of a number of centres of force mutually interacting, then the ego might be regarded as a central centre of energy, forming the bond of union for all the rest.

There must still, however, remain an antithesis, if not between mind and matter, yet between the force of volition which I create, and the forces of my organism and its environment, which I can neither create nor alter, but only use. Mr Wallace, in his 'Contributions to Natural Selection,' says: "We have traced one force to an origin in our own will, while we have no knowledge of any other primary cause of force. It does not seem, therefore, an improbable conclusion that all force may be will-force, and that the whole universe is not merely dependent upon, but actually is, the will of higher intelligences, or of one supreme intelligence." The difficulty is that will, as we know it, is incapable of producing these external forces. However, inasmuch as the will which creates these

forces (if they be so created) is external to our own, it is not to be expected that we should be capable of gauging its resources. I cannot see that we have any grounds upon which to discuss the question as to whether this metaphysical Power works upon a matter coexternal with Himself, or whether He has created not only the harmony which we observe in nature, but also the very materials in which that harmony is manifested. The only question which we seem capable of answering is this: Can I see, from the working and effects of natural forces, that they are ultimately connected in *some* way with an intelligent and volitional Ego, who is causing them all to work together for good, in a way more or less similar to that in which, by means of my will, I accomplish rational purposes of my own? Let us try to find an answer to this question.

Comte says that "our power of foreseeing phenomena, and our power of controlling them, destroy the belief that they are governed by changeable wills." But when they are controlled by us they *are* governed by changeable wills, wills that may be changeable even to caprice. "Comte's inconsistency," says Martineau, "would be extraordinary, if it were not ordinary in his class—the inconsistency, viz., of excluding all will from the

universe, because there is nothing but necessity, yet insisting on necessity as an attribute of will." Now, since we find, not only that these forces can be controlled by us, but that when not so controlled, they work together according to an absolutely unchanging method—a method which results in the evolution of higher and higher forms of existence, the most natural and reasonable conclusion seems to be that they are connected with another Will "in whom there is no change, neither shadow of turning," and "who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Further, when we remember that each one of these forces, if it worked irregularly instead of regularly, would be capable of throwing the entire universe into confusion, we are confirmed in our conviction that the world in which we find ourselves is not the production of a fortuitous concurrence of atoms, but that there is a Being working through all atoms and forces everywhere, who loves beauty, harmony, progress, and joy—a Being "who maketh the winds His angels, and flaming fires His messengers."

This view is nowadays generally regarded as effete. Mr Morley, for example, says that "the argument from design, if it has not received its death-blow from Darwinism, is for the nonce, at least, in a state of suspended animation." But

the truth is, that the theory of Evolution, rightly understood, does not in the least clash with the argument from design. It may be that worlds for myriads of ages past—nay, for an eternity of ages, if you please—have been produced by the gradual cooling and condensation of fiery vapour; it may be that the highest forms of life with which we are acquainted—even the human ego itself—have been evolved from some primordial germ or germs originally latent in a fiery cloud; *but it does not follow* that "the invariable operation of natural laws" is the *sole* and *ultimate* explanation of which these processes are susceptible. Of course, if it be the law of the universe that atoms of all shapes and sizes have been eternally falling through space in all manner of directions and velocities, and that by their haphazard concurrence all things have arisen as they are, then there is no room for volition. But, on the other hand, if it is contrary to experience to believe that such a concurrence of atoms could have produced a cosmos—and certainly our experience, so far as it goes, discredits the hypothesis—if, further, there is reason to think that the phenomena of the universe do actually exhibit signs of a controlling will, then it follows that the hypothesis of a fortuitous concurrence of atoms must be rejected. And since the voice of Law

is "the harmony of the world," there does seem ground for acknowledging that "her seat is the bosom of God."

The researches of modern science have demonstrated the universality of the reign of Law. Formerly the universe was peopled with thousands of imaginary beings, and supposed to be at the mercy of their caprice and vindictiveness. It was thought that any one of them, if strong enough to prevail over the rest, might destroy the order of nature at a moment's notice; and religion, therefore, consisted in appeasing these divinities, so powerful for evil, with barley, wine, or blood. In the darkness of an eclipse, in the rolling peal of the thunder, in the eruption of a volcano, in the devastation of a plague, and even in an unusual state of the weather, men imagined the capricious interference of supernatural powers. But observation and reflection have shown the folly of all such notions. The more that nature has been investigated, the more has her uniformity been brought to light. Resemblances have been discovered where they were least expected; as, for example, in the fact that an almost infinite number of animal species have been formed by mere variations of a few primary types. And not only has nature been seen to be uniform in our own world, but the most remote spheres

and ages regarding which we are able to gain any information, have been found to be subject to the same laws as those which obtain here now. We know beyond a doubt that gravity, which causes an apple to fall to the earth, is also concerned in the revolutions of the most distant star; "that the law which moulds a planet rounds a tear;" and that the light of to-day has exactly the same properties as the light of the pre-Adamite world. So certain are we of the universality of law, that we know *apparent* exceptions are not, and cannot be, real exceptions. In fact, a seeming violation of law has not unfrequently led to fresh confirmation of its absolute inviolability. The irregularities of Uranus, *e.g.*, suggested the exact spot where some unknown planet must exist, and where, accordingly, what is now called Neptune was soon afterwards discovered. Even in cases where, owing to the complexity of the problems, our knowledge is less exact, even where we have not been able to ascertain the precise manner in which certain results are produced, we yet feel absolutely sure that these results are brought about by unchanging and unchangeable laws. Epidemics of cholera and plague, which our ancestors attributed to the anger of Heaven, we believe to be due to a violation of the laws of health: we no

longer connect them with a sudden interference of Providence, but we set about tracing them to the impurity of our pumps, or to some other equally simple and natural cause. And similarly, in regard to the weather, though it is the very type of fickleness, and though our knowledge of the laws which govern it is exceedingly imperfect, yet there is not an educated man in the world to-day who does not feel certain that rain and drought, heat and cold, good seasons and bad, depend upon laws as stringent and immutable as those which determine the planetary motions. In a word, to us in this nineteenth century the universe is essentially and pre-eminently a universe of order and law.

But all this, though it disproves the existence of a metaphysical caprice, does not disprove the existence of a metaphysical Will. The only reign of law incompatible with volition would be the reign of the law of chaos. Law, it may be observed, is rather a misleading word. It is generally printed with a capital "L," which, like a grenadier's bearskin cap (as Professor Huxley remarks in regard to the Absolute), makes it look more formidable than it would do by nature. Law only means invariable sequence. The question still remains, "Why is the sequence invariable?" It would be

more correct to say the universe is governed *according* to laws than that it is governed by laws; for it is not maintained by any one that the invariable sequences are expressive of their own volitions. They do not explain themselves. Hume has shown that there is nothing in a physical cause to account for its effect. Apart from customary experience, anything might be the cause of anything. The results, therefore, of the reign of law need an explanation which Physics cannot give. It would appear that if the Will behind nature were capricious or less potent, if, like an operative in a mill who has constantly to stop his machinery to piece a broken thread, it were made manifest by its *failures*, then it would be more often recognised. "Nowadays," says Comte, "the heavens declare no other glory than that of Hipparchus, Kepler, Newton, and the rest who have found out the laws of their sequence." That is true, if the discovery of regular sequences be also the discovery that there can be no cause for their regularity. But what if those sequences, by the cosmic results of their *combined* operations, testify to some unity of design and purpose? As the Duke of Argyll has shown in his 'Reign of Law,' the immutability of the laws of nature is the very circumstance that makes them subject to contriv-

ance through endless cycles of design. True, the many gods of fetishism have been annihilated by scientific investigation; but the same unity and harmony which proved that there *are not many* wills seem to me to have shown at the same time that *there is one.* It cannot be proved that the ultimate forces of nature were created by God. But if they were not, if they are only used by Him as we use them, the argument from design still holds good; for intelligent purpose is seen in the effects that follow from their supernatural combination.

The theory of evolution, just like science in general, is concerned with the *methods* of nature's working, and not with the question as to whether or not there is an origin discoverable for these methods. Science is not to be blamed for not taking their origin into account, it is only to be condemned when it dogmatically asserts that there is no origin or that it cannot be discovered. Science is concerned with orderly sequences; metaphysics with the why and wherefore of this order. The order is the same to an onlooker, whether or not he recognises the necessity of tracing it to an ultimate source. The problem of science or philosophy, as stated by Mill, is this: "What are the fewest assumptions which, being

granted, the order of nature as it exists would be the result?" But the problem of metaphysics is to ascertain on what these assumptions ultimately depend, and whether or not the present system has been brought about by "collocations" that were purely casual and accidental?

On the supposition of there being a tendency in a certain primordial homogeneous mass to develop, by successive differentiations and integrations, into this great variety of things, there still remains the question, What is the origin of that tendency, and why is it so sure and regular in its action? The further back you trace its operation, the greater becomes the necessity for connecting it with an intelligent mind; since the longer you suppose it to have been at work, the less likely does it become that its rational results can be the effects of irrationality. It is idle to say that the same logic would make us ask, "and God whence?" We are not seeking to ascertain the origin of God, but the origin of nature's order and adaptation. If we can trace these to an intelligent will, we have no intellectual necessity for going further; for, as we have seen, it is the peculiarity of a free ego that it *originates* volitions for itself, and therefore a purposeful series of events, if traced back to a volition, has had a sufficient origin

assigned it. So far from a voluntary origin for the method being incompatible with the method itself, it has often happened that the supposition of the former has led to the discovery of the latter. Robert Boyle tells us: "I remember that when I asked our famous Harvey what were the things that induced him to think of the circulation of the blood, he answered me, that when he took notice of the valves in the veins of many parts of the body, so placed that they gave free passage to the blood towards the heart, but opposed the passage of the venous blood the contrary way, he was invited to think that so provident a cause as nature had not placed so many valves without a design, and no design seemed more probable than that since the blood could not well, because of the interposing valves, be sent by the veins to the limbs, it should be sent through the arteries and returned through the veins, whose valves did not oppose its course that way." There are no books so rich in illustrations of contrivance, adaptation, and skill,—no books in which these or similar words are more frequently used, than the books of Darwin, whose theory has been supposed to have annihilated the argument from design.

The entire compatibility of evolution and design was recently well shown by an anonymous writer.

"The purpose in nature is no less God's because He has compelled the conditions of existence [or, as I should prefer to say, natural forces] to work it out for Him slowly, than if He had spoken each creature into existence by a single creative fiat. Nor does the employment of subordinate means affect God's part in the creation. Two ignorant men might have a controversy as to the origin of a bronze statue. Says the one, 'He must have been a great sculptor who made that statue;' to which the other replies, 'You are quite wrong, my friend; no sculptor ever touched the statue. I saw it made myself, a formless molten mass flow out of the furnace, disappear in the sand, and then in a while come out as you see it, a bronze statue. There was, first, "a tendency" in the molten metal to "vary indefinitely;" and there was, secondly, something in the surrounding sand that helped all variations in the direction of a beautiful statue, and checked all those in other directions. The result is a statue made not by contrivance but by natural selection.'" The answer to this objection would not be far to seek.

No doubt if the theory of evolution is true, it is necessary to reject Paley's form of the argument from design. Evolution is incompatible with the doctrine of "creation by paroxysms." It would

forbid our believing that species were made by distinct creative fiats, or that every definite organ is specially adapted for a special end. And indeed the existence of so many rudimentary and abortive organs, as well as the gradual and natural moulding of organs and species by the adjustment of external and internal relations, are strongly opposed to such a supposition. In Paley's famous illustration, the adaptation of all the parts of the watch to the function or purpose of showing the time, is held to be evidence that the watch was specially contrived to that end, on the ground that the only cause we know of competent to produce such an effect as a watch which shall keep time, is a contriving intelligence adapting the means directly to that end. "Suppose, however," says Professor Huxley, "that any one had been able to show that the watch had not been made directly by any person, but that it was the result of the modification of another watch, which kept time but poorly; and that this, again, had proceeded from a structure which could hardly be called a watch at all, seeing that it had no figures on the dial, and the hands were rudimentary; and that going back and back in time we came at last to a revolving barrel as the earliest traceable rudiment of the whole fabric. And imagine that all these changes

had resulted, first, from a tendency of the structure to vary indefinitely; and, secondly, from something in the surrounding world which helped all variations in the direction of an accurate time-keeper, and checked all those in other directions; and then it is obvious that the force of Paley's argument would be gone. For it would be demonstrated that an apparatus thoroughly well adapted to a particular purpose might be the result of a method of trial and error, worked by unintelligent agents, as well as of the direct application of the means appropriate to that end."

Very good. But whence come that "tendency" and that "something in the surrounding world"? When we consider their results, it is contrary to experience to suppose that their combined working is the effect of chance. As Baden Powell puts it: "Suppose you see a stone strike against an object, you may not know what is the cause; it might be blown by the wind, or it might have fallen from a precipice. But if the thing were repeated, if a number of stones were thrown, and so as to hit the same mark, you would conclude they were aimed at it, and that the result was the effect of intelligent volition. Suppose, on inquiry, you discover that a machine has thrown the stones, then the machine itself has to be accounted for. In short, the mind

cannot rest satisfied till it has traced an intelligent act to an intelligent author." The purpose, which from the days of Anaxagoras has been more or less observed in nature, is not proved to be no purpose because it is accomplished by means that do not constantly break down and require readjustment. Evolution has not disproved design, it has only suggested that the Designer works in a different way from that which we had formerly supposed. There is no reason why things may not be made for their circumstances, though they are partly made by them. "Insects," says Dr Abbott in his 'Cambridge Sermons,' "have not only fertilised flowers, but, attracted by the brightness, have fertilised the most beautiful. Each speck and spot in each petal of each flower bears witness to the labours of these creatures, whom for ages we have treated as emblems of beautiful idleness. Thus has God clothed the grass of the field year by year with increasing glory; and surely He is none the less the author of this glory because He has wrought it by the joyful labours of His obedient creatures." It has been too often imagined that the theory of evolution proves the old doctrine of Lucretius:—

> "Nil ideo quoniam natumst in corpore ut uti
> Possemus, sed quod natumst id procreat usum."

But till it has been *proved* that the working together of internal and external relations, so as to accomplish a progressive result, is *not* due to design, we are compelled to suppose that it *is*. Change may be due to chance, but it is contrary both to experience and to Reason to suppose that there can be an evolution of the higher from the lower apart from intelligence and volition. Natural selection, since it produces an intelligent result, is, after all, but another form of contrivance.

The argument from design is a strictly logical argument. I believe that my neighbour is a personal, free, intelligent being like myself, not because he has a body, but because of the consistency and purpose manifest in his words and deeds. So I believe that there is an intelligent will behind the forces of nature, because I see them exhibiting marks of adaptation, and working together for definite ends, in a similar way to that in which they work when adjusted by myself or my fellows. As Mill puts it in his 'Posthumous Essays': "The design argument is not drawn from mere resemblances in nature to the works of human intelligence, but from the special character of those resemblances. The circumstances in which it is alleged that the world resembles the

works of man are not circumstances taken at random, but are particular instances of a circumstance which experience shows to have a real connection with an intelligent origin, the fact of conspiring to an end. The argument, therefore, is not one of mere analogy. As mere analogy it has its weight, but it is more than analogy, it is an inductive argument." It is true, Mill goes on to say, that creative forethought is not absolutely the only link by which the origin of the wonderful mechanism of the eye may be connected with the fact of sight, that there is another connecting link, the principle, viz., of the survival of the fittest. "This principle," Mill says, "though not inconsistent with creation, would, if proved, greatly attenuate the evidence for it." I do not see that the evidence is attenuated in the very least. The doctrine of the survival of the fittest does not account for the fact that there are fittest to survive. It does not, in other words, explain the existence of organisms, nor the existence of any measure of adaptation between organism and environment. It merely expresses the method according to which it is supposed that this adaptation has been increased.

On the other hand, the atheistical argument is most illogical. In human affairs, and in human

works, except within very narrow limits, we never find order or progress, harmony or adaptation, due to anything but design. To assert, therefore, that these attributes of nature are the result of chance, is to maintain a hypothesis which is not only unwarranted, but which is absolutely contradicted by experience. Nor does an attempt to substitute for God an eternal evolution of matter conform to the test which materialists maintain to be the criterion of truth. The ultimate and primordial atoms, if they *could* be perceived, might no doubt be considered as "reducible to sensations;" but since they cannot be seen or touched, or apprehended by sense, they come as far short of the proof demanded as Aristotle's πρώτη ὕλη, or Hegel's "pure being."

The attempt to explain the regularity in nature on mathematical principles of probability seems to me as absurd as it is ingenious. This regularity, says Laplace, "which some have considered a proof of Providence, is, on reflection, perceived to be only the development of the respective probabilities of the simple events, which ought to occur more frequently according as they are more probable." Bernoulli speaks in a similar manner. To this Mr Venn justly objects, that it is one of the relics of realism, an illustration of the tendency to ob-

jectify our conceptions, even when they have no right to exist. "A uniformity is observed sometimes, as in games of chance; it is found to be so connected with the constitution of the bodies as to be capable of being inferred beforehand, (though even here the connection is not so necessary as is supposed in cases that lie beyond the range of those vouched for by experience); then this constitution is converted into an objective probability, supposed to develop somehow into a sequence which exhibits uniformity; and finally, this questionable objective probability is assumed to exist in all cases in which uniformity is observed." The conception, Mr Venn adds, "is utterly inappropriate where the type changes," as in progressive evolution. Quetelet assumes that the number of males and females being equal, the chance of any one entry in the register being male is one half, and of two males running a quarter, and so on; hence he says, "Once in a certain number of times we shall find the births of ten males happening successively." He thinks it would be "tedious" to consult the registers, so he resorts to experiments "more expeditious, and quite as conclusive"—viz., putting forty black and forty white balls into a bag, and noting the successive colours that are drawn out. But if there be any sense or value

in such an application of the doctrines of probability, why did not Quetelet go a step further, and, putting in forty speckled balls, deduce therefrom the "objective probabilities" of hermaphrodites?

Accepting the argument from design is not accepting anthropomorphism. Xenocrates said that if the ox could think it would attribute oxality to God; and Spinoza made a similar remark about the triangle and the sphere. But there is no force in these remarks, unless oxality, triangularity, and sphericity are suggested by nature in the same manner as purpose or intelligence. Bain's objection to the argument from design is as follows: "Instead of mind being the cause of gravity, gravity and other physical forces are the *sine quâ non* of mind. Our only experience of mental manifestations is in connection with a gravitating framework of exceedingly complicated mechanism. Mind, as known by us, is the very last thing we should set up as an independent power swaying and sustaining the forces of nature. The notion that mind must be the cause of natural changes could not have arisen from a large experience. The agency of men and animals endowed with mind is a fact to be admitted; but there are other natural agencies, such as gravity, each good in its sphere, without any

accompaniment of mental facts." Now it is quite true that our volitions cannot cause gravity or other physical forces, and so we are unable dogmatically to assert that these forces have *originated* from will. But it is equally true that by our volitions we are able to adjust them, and to make them work together so as to accomplish rational and desirable results; and we have no experience whatever of their combining to produce such results except as a consequence of intelligent volition. The very fact that my body is a "mechanism" drives me irresistibly to the conclusion that it is the work, directly or indirectly, of a mechanician as much superior to a human mechanician as that body is superior to anything which a man could make. In attributing an intelligent will to God, we attribute to Him Personality; but we do not attribute to Him the whole of our humanity. We do not assert that His will works by the same means of brain and nerves and muscles which we are obliged to use; and since we have no idea of the mode in which these instruments are used by our own will, there seems no great obstacle to our supposing that another will can work with other instruments, or in altogether different modes. If we see adjustment, order, and progress in human

arrangements, we infer a human will; and since we see all this in nature, it is in reality by a strictly *experiential* argument that we infer a superhuman will. Herbert Spencer says that it is not a question whether we should apply Personality, or something lower, to the Unknowable; the alternative is "between Personality and something higher." But we have no higher word. And since this term is the only one capable of expressing the intelligence and volition to which nature seems to bear testimony, it appears to me strictly applicable.

To sum up—The denial of Personality is the denial of knowledge. Without a metaphysical ego there could be neither memory nor sensation. The attempt to disprove the existence of such an ego is only rendered apparently successful by that existence being throughout assumed. Its very negation is tantamount to its affirmation; for without this principle of permanence the concepts employed in its denial could not possibly have been formed. In other words, the personality, which should be the beginning of metaphysics, is essential to the conception and statement of every anti-metaphysical argument. Further, since consciousness has borne such strong testimony to the unity and continuity of the ego, which is the

demonstrable *sine quâ non* of every mental state, a presumption arises in favour of the evidence it offers in regard to human freedom. But even admitting that the supposed sense of freedom is an illusion, our necessitation is allowed by all to be compatible with a certain ability to control the forces of nature, and to make them subservient to our own purposes. And since, apart from our interference, these forces have worked together to form a cosmos, an order of nature, a system of things in which it is desirable to live, we are arguing strictly along the lines of experience when we infer the control of a superhuman intelligence. The Personality, which is the end of metaphysics, is frequently assumed in the very books which are supposed to have done away for ever with all traces of its existence; for in these books such words as "design," "adaptation," "purpose," "meaning," "mechanism," are constantly applied to the products and processes of nature. So that, like M. Jourdain, who talked prose without knowing it till informed of the fact by his tutor, the Positivists turn out to have been all along unwittingly metaphysicians. They say there is no ego; yet they talk of "I," "he," "we," "our mind," "our intelligence," &c., &c., which expressions are *merely synonyms* for the ego. They say all man's actions

are mechanically necessitated; yet they talk about his "*self-adjustment*," and the "*control*" which he exercises over external phenomena. They say there is no evidence of a Mind in nature; yet they are everlastingly applying to natural objects words which mean nothing unless they mean that these objects have been intelligently and purposely produced. If we were to extract from the writings of anti-metaphysical thinkers everything that had a metaphysical signification, what remained would be as meaningless as a Euclid from which all the symbols had been omitted.

THE END.

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